Silver Chimes in Syria



WILLIAM S.
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SILVER CHIMES IN SYRIA

HENRY A. NELSON MEMORIAL

Tripoli Boys' School

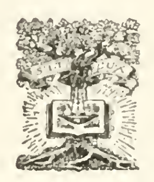
SILVER CHIMES IN SYRIA

GLIMPSES OF A MISSIONARY'S EXPERIENCES

BY

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This book is affectionately inscribed to her who has been the companion of my life for twenty-five years; my helper in all my work; my cheer and comfort in all circumstances; the maker of my home; the source of all that is silvery in the chimes that ring to-day.

HOMS, SYRIA, JULY 17, 1913.

PREFACE

WHEN a tourist is seated on the deck of a steamer, waiting to leave the country in which he has enjoyed an outing, his eyes do not seek the low-lying shore of the sea, for the memories he would retain hereafter. He lifts his eyes to the overhanging mountains. Nor is it the whole massive range that holds his vision. He looks instinctively to the scattered, lofty summits which stand aloof as it were from the monotony of the lower range. Especially as the sun sinks below the western horizon do his eyes dwell lovingly on those highest peaks which are colored with the light of the setting sun.

My purpose in sending out this collection of sketches is somewhat the same. I have not attempted a continuous narrative, with all the monotony of repeated acts, but have sought to make vivid to the reader some of the more conspicuous features of missionary

life, in the hope of deepening sympathy with the workers and increasing zeal in the work. That is my excuse for the free use of the personal pronoun, not to make prominent the person, but to emphasize the reality. May the volume be enjoyed by our fellow workers in America, and blessed by Him whom we all serve.

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Chapter I

ARRIVAL IN SYRIA

EVERY individual makes a new personal discovery, as with the passage of years, he realizes the difference between the long look forward over a given period, and the look backward over the same period, when it is completed. To the new arrival on the field the veteran of twenty-five years' experience appears to have spent a very long time in the service; but as he looks back over his own life, at the end of a similar period, he wonders that he ever entertained such an opinion. Looking back to the year 1888, the events of that time do not seem at all remote, and it

is hard to realize that to anyone that year can appear a very long way in the past.

On the last day of October, in the early morning, a steamer of the Austrian-Lloyd Line cast anchor in front of Beirut. That was long before the building of the harbor, and all vessels tossed in the open roadstead, at the mercy of wind and wave, only slightly sheltered by the long headland of Ras Beirut, where the tall lighthouse rears its slender shaft, and where the Syrian Protestant College stands, as a more important symbol of light-giving.

The anchor was scarcely dropped before the little boats from the shore crowded about the ladders and the boatmen came swarming over the sides of the vessel, to take possession of the passengers and carry them ashore. It is always a perplexing but interesting scene to the newcomer. The curious costumes of many colors give an appearance of gayety to the crowd; the shouting of the guttural Arabic makes one think of Babel; the wild gesticulating of

the excited people suggests the possibility of a riot; the seizing of baggage and pulling of passengers by eager boatmen make one think that the day of personal liberty and private property is passed. As a rule, however, it is all good-natured, and the noise is more bantering than quarreling. In fact, one soon becomes accustomed to the turmoil as an indication of lack of orderly proceeding in the Orient.

Among the first figures to appear on deck that October morning was one quieter but no less eager than the Arab boatmen. He quickly made his way to the room of the new missionaries, just arriving from America, prepared to take them ashore, and even to escort them at once to his own home in Sidon. It was a most welcome, homelike experience to the tired travelers, and the cheery voice and cordial welcome of Mr. W. K. Eddy will never be forgotten.

There were many things in the journey, thus ended, that had made it trying. The young couple had crossed the Atlantic

entirely among strangers and the ocean had not been kind to them. Seasickness is never a happy experience, and when it becomes a continuous performance, in connection with a wedding journey, it seems most inappropriate. Pleasant visits with family friends and relatives in Scotland effaced the memories of the Atlantic. Visiting new scenes and beautiful places in Switzerland gave much pleasure by the way, but in an unfortunate day the germs of malaria had been absorbed and southern Italy was reached with fever and weakness that made sightseeing a burden.

Who can forget his first glimpse of the real Orient, at Port Said? The noise and the dirt; the squalor and the glaring sun; the rush of the crowd and the utter lonesomeness of the stranger, make a contrast and mixture that are not easily matched in life's ordinary experiences. Four days were to pass before a steamer went to Beirut. It was not a pleasant prospect for travelers homesick and weak from fever to have to

tarry for four days in a dismal hotel, with nothing attractive in the way of companionship or occupation. Besides this, our trunks had not been sent forward as promised, and we were obliged to depend upon the limited hand baggage with which we had crossed the Continent. It is easy to imagine the sensations with which the young bride looked forward to making her first appearance among strangers, with a face pale from fever and an outfit so unexpectedly limited.

The hearty welcome of Mr. Eddy on the deck of that Austrian steamer in Beirut harbor was a needed tonic, and his skill and experience readily passed us through the intricacies of the customhouse and brought us to the hospitable home of his father. Of the friends who conspired to make those first days bright, many have been called away to the other shore, though others are still our associates in the service of Syria. Dr. and Mrs. W. W. Eddy, with whom we spent our first ten days in Syria, left us

many years ago. Dr. Samuel Jessup was always thoughtful, bringing bright flowers from his garden to continue the impression of his bright face and cheery words, when he called upon the strangers. He and Mrs. Jessup, whose home was one of the brightest spots of those early years, have also gone on before to their well-earned reward. Mr. March, coming down from the mountains on his way to Tripoli, was especially ready in his plans for the comfort of his new associates in Tripoli Station. But it is not necessary to mention each one. The beauty of missionary life is the unity of fellowship and the completeness with which every newcomer is received into the intimacy and love of the circle, which is only less close and intimate than that of the family itself.

After ten days spent in Beirut in trying to get rid of the malaria and in acquiring some knowledge of the Arabic alphabet, we went on to Tripoli, our future home. It was a cold, windy Saturday afternoon. We were

taken out to the steamer in a small boat, which tossed on the restless waves in a way which we supposed to be normal. The steamer was small and crowded with a miscellaneous company, most of whom were not happy, to say the least. Fortunately it is only a four hours' ride, for the wind increased in violence as we proceeded, and when the anchor was dropped at sundown off Tripoli, it seemed doubtful whether any boats could come out to meet us. In due time, however, a boat pulled alongside, and there was Mr. March, who had come out over that rough sea to welcome us to our new home, though he did not think we would venture to start from Beirut in such a storm. The steamer was rolling so badly that the ladder could not be lowered at all, and we crept out on it as it lay horizontally along the ship's side, and then, when the tip was lowest, simply dropped into the arms of the boatmen below. Then began the laborious pull for the shore. We were two hours reaching land, our clothes

soaked, our spirits at zero, but most happy to reach the warm, cozy haven of the March home in the Mina of Tripoli. It was the beginning of a most beautiful fellowship with Mr. and Mrs. March and their children, whose sweet introduction of themselves won our hearts at once and who, though now grown to maturity, still call us by the old, affectionate titles of uncle and aunt. Thus, for the second time in our short missionary experience, we were made to feel the comfort and peace of being taken into the warmth and love of a Christian home, no longer as strangers, but as brethren.

We wished to take possession of our own home as soon as possible. Our household goods were in the customhouse, and another first experience was before us. Everything had to be examined and its purpose explained to the satisfaction of the Turkish inspector. To him it seemed a wholly unnecessary amount of furniture for one person, for of course he could not recognize

that the wife's existence made any difference. A box of class photographs was examined in detail, and great surprise manifested that one person should have so many friends. A small vase for flowers in the shape of a kettle resting on five legs puzzled the examiner, until he picked up the perforated piece of a soap dish, and decided that he had found the appropriate adaptation of the two pieces. It did not seem necessary to explain, so long as he was satisfied, and no harm was done.

We had many things to learn besides the language. Our home belonged to a man whose name was translated to us as Mr. Victory-of-God Brass. In an arch under the parlor windows he had hung a donkey's skull and some beads, to keep off the evil eye of jealousy from his fine house. It was a pleasant house, well located near the city gate which had been known in former days as Donkey Gate, only a few minutes' walk from the girls' school and just at the end of the tram line connecting the city with the

harbor, two miles distant. In planning for our new home we had indulged in the luxury of two pairs of simple lace curtains for our parlor windows. When we entered the house, our amazement can hardly be exaggerated at the discovery that the parlor had not two but eight windows, each calling for curtains twelve feet long. Our lace curtains were relegated to service elsewhere. Mr. Eddy had kindly arranged to come up from Sidon to help us in this first settling of our new home, and his help and companionship were invaluable. He went with me to the shops to purchase such things as were needed, and the shopkeepers recognized at once his fluent Arabic and his companion's ignorance of the language. More than one shopkeeper called him aside and asked him to bring the stranger to them for his purchases, promising him a handsome commission for his services.

The house was soon made habitable and just three weeks after our first landing in Syria we slept under our own roof, with our

own possessions about us, and were ready to begin our own independent home life in the land of our adoption. We had made our beginning, and a bright, happy beginning it was, notwithstanding the difficulties and drawbacks inevitable in such conditions.

Chapter II

LANGUAGE STUDY

WHATEVER differences there may be in experiences in missionary life, all missionaries are faced with a most troublesome experience in learning a new language. It is more or less natural for everyone to magnify what concerns himself. "Our children" are always a little better than our neighbors'. "Our cook" makes better bread than anyone else. And "mother's pies" — well, that calls for no argument. It is much the same way among missionaries. It is probable that there are just about as many "hardest languages" in the world as there are distinct mission fields. But, then, there must be one that is really the hardest, and we in Syria think we come pretty well up on the list, even though we do not claim absolute

preëminence. The Arabic, though rich and beautiful, is certainly a difficult language, and I am sure the Syria Mission would give a unanimous vote on the resolution that it is the toughest linguistic proposition we have ever attacked. It was one of the terse and suggestive remarks of Dr. Henry Jessup that at the end of the first year the new missionary thought he knew the Arabic; at the end of the second year he thought he knew nothing; and at the end of the third year he wondered how he got hold of it.

The isolation of a new missionary is at times appalling. No matter how kind and helpful the older missionaries may be, they are strangers, after all, with whom one must get acquainted. The houses are strange, and not adapted to make one feel at home readily. Servants with their very imperfect knowledge of English must be directed mainly by signs. Everything seems unbearably dirty; the sun is unaccountably hot, even in winter; the food is

strange and does not appeal to a Westerner's appetite. But, worst of all, among the babel of noises, there is not a familiar sound, and with the best intentions of friendliness, one cannot reveal the intention, except by the perpetual, inane grin.

We began the study of the language, as everyone does, almost at the wharf. Even before recovering from the effects of the voyage, the Arabic primer, with its alphabet, was brought to the bedside. At one of the earliest lessons in Tripoli, the old, gray-bearded teacher wished to impress a new word, "Milh." He repeated the difficult combination, and then inquired in some way whether we knew what the word meant. The look of blank ignorance on our faces gave him the answer, and he rose and stepped with dignity, in his flowing robes, to the door. Opening this, he called in a loud voice across the open court to the cook, "Peter, bring me some salt." Then with a little of this household necessity in his palm, he came back to his stupid pupils,

and, pointing at the salt, said emphatically, "Milh." That word was permanently fixed in our vocabulary.

In less than two months after our arrival in Syria, and forty days after taking possession of our own home, came New Year's Day. With the self-confidence of youth and ignorance, we decided to keep open house on our own account. In the forenoon we had our language teacher with us to steer us through the intricacies of oriental etiquette, and to tell us what to say, in the varying circumstances, and all went well. After dinner, however, we excused him, as we did not expect many more calls, and waited our fate. After a time, when the parlor was well filled with a mixed company of men and women, among whom was the old teacher who had taught us the word for salt, I used the wrong pronominal termination, probably the masculine where I should have used the feminine. The old gentleman rose from his place with great impressiveness and started round the entire

circle, pointing his finger at each person, and pronouncing distinctly to every man, "tak" and to every woman, "tik." It created a laugh, of course, but it is needless to say that whatever mistakes I have made in Arabic since, it has never been because I did not know the difference between the masculine and feminine form of the second person pronominal affix.

Chapter III

TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION

IN preparing for the active service of a missionary, it was necessary to have a horse and a touring outfit. Our servant was told that we wanted to buy a horse, and if he heard of any good chance, to let us know. In a few days a man came to the house with a large gray mare for me to try. I rode on her a little and examined her so far as I was capable of doing, and was greatly pleased with her. I knew enough, however, of oriental methods, to show no particular zeal over the matter, and left the owner without any indication of my pleasure. In my own mind, I decided that I should like to own that mare, and that I would be willing to pay as much as twenty pounds for her, though I hoped to secure a horse for half that amount. As

I came in I told the servant to make inquiry about the price of the mare. He returned soon, saying the owner would sacrifice his own interests so far as to let me have her for seventy-five pounds. I did not buy that mare, but waited several months until I found a sturdy gray horse, which I bought for less than ten pounds. He served me well for five years, when I sold him for little less than the original cost.

Tripoli field was rejoicing and congratulating itself in those days over the macadamized road recently opened between Tripoli at the coast and Homs and Hamath in the interior. It was sixty-five miles to Homs and thirty-five more to Hamath. A cumbersome diligence made the trip to Homs in eleven hours, going one day and returning the next, and a lighter vehicle made the round trip between Homs and Hamath every day. This was a great advance in rapid transit and a great convenience in all lines of work.

In all Syria there was not a mile of railroad, and in northern Syria there was no carriage road besides the one line just mentioned. All traveling had to be done on horseback or afoot. Horses, donkeys, mules and camels were the universal means of travel and transportation. Every day caravans of camels came into Tripoli by the hundred, bringing grain, olive oil and Syrian butter from the interior. They returned loaded with sugar, rice, kerosene oil, and English yarn and cloth. The first railroad was built in the early nineties from Jaffa to Jerusalem. Later came the line from Beirut to Damascus; then the line from Haifa through Galilee to Damascus, the line from Damascus to the south, and the line from Damascus to Medina. Then came the branch line, from the Beirut-Damascus line, to Homs, Hamath and Aleppo, and finally the Tripoli Homs line and the German Bagdad line, passing through Aleppo from east to west. With many other lines and extensions under con-

sideration, it is evident that railroad communication is fairly started in Syria and that this part of the East has begun to feel the influence of steam.

During our first year in Tripoli, before I was at all familiar with the various places, I overheard a conversation between two of our associates about a recent trip to Beirut by land. The remark was made, "I suppose you took a carriage from Junieh to Beirut." This is about one fourth of the distance and was considered a great gain in the facilities of transportation. The answer came, with even greater evidence of satisfaction, "No, I rode in a carriage from Jebail." This meant a doubling of the advantage, as Jebail is halfway between Tripoli and Beirut. That was in 1889 and it was not until 1912 that this carriage road was completed, so that one could make the whole distance on wheels.

The tramway connecting Tripoli City and the Mina, or harbor, was the only tramway in Syria and was an object of

great pride. It had a single track about two miles long, with a switch in the middle for the passing of cars from the opposite ends. A car started from each terminus about once in twenty minutes and made the trip in about the same length of time, the fare being four cents and the motor power horses or mules. The cars were originally imported from Birmingham, of the double-decker type. They are still in daily service, receiving a fresh coat of paint and necessary repairs every year. This line continues to run, though with somewhat more frequent service and with a reduced fare of two cents, since public carriages now run on a road alongside the tram. Carriage roads now extend in several directions from Tripoli, and there are many public carriages to hire; even an automobile is occasionally seen and several bicycles have made their appearance.

The postal system is a curiosity to those who are accustomed to free delivery several times a day. It would be supposed that

the Turkish post would carry all letters for people in Turkey, since Turkey is a member of the International Postal Union. At all the seaports, however, one finds foreign post offices, which do a large business in receiving and forwarding mail by all the steamers. To points in the interior they cannot deliver mail. In Tripoli we had the French, and later the Austrian service. In 1890 cholera appeared in Tripoli and all steamers stopped calling at the port, to avoid quarantine. We were confined to the use of the Turkish mail. Two messengers brought the mail by land from Beirut each week. It was Tripoli which was infected with cholera, and yet the incoming mail was stopped outside the city and drenched with carbolic acid, while the outgoing mail was not touched. The mail distributor in Tripoli could not read any language, not even Arabic, and so he used to bring the bag directly to our house and empty it on the floor, in order to get my help in assorting the letters for him. We were glad to have

the first pick of the mail, as it assured our receiving all our own mail, and that promptly.

At the last conference of the International Postal Union there was a general reduction of postage and an increase in the unit of weight. Turkey has given her adherence to this international arrangement, but maintains her old internal rates so that we have the present absurd condition, that a piaster stamp will carry twenty grams to any place abroad, while it will carry only fifteen grams from one town to its next neighbor. Additional weight abroad requires three quarters of a piaster for each additional twenty grams, while for internal use every additional fifteen grams requires a full piaster. Thus a letter weighing sixty grams will go from an interior town like Homs to San Francisco for two piasters and a half, while the same letter, if sent from Homs to Tripoli, would cost four piasters.

It might be supposed that there would be

good caravan roads, at least, in a country where all produce must be carried on quadrupeds, and all travelers must ride or walk. The reverse was true, and though the past twenty-five years have witnessed great improvement in this respect, there is still much to be desired in most localities. Many of the roads cannot be described as anything but trails through the rocky ground. The chief consideration in locating a road seems to be to have it run through ground which is fit for nothing else, for it would be a pity to waste arable ground, and so a road must go around, no matter what the distance. Whatever stones are gathered from the fields are thrown into the highway, making it rougher than ever. In some parts of the mountains, the road will lie along the top of a solid stone dike, ten to fifteen feet wide, from which the traveler looks down to a depth of eight or ten feet upon the fields and mulberry patches on each side. It has been said that a road, in Syria, is that part of the

country to be avoided in traveling, so far as possible. This inference is easy to understand when you notice that all the trodden paths are in the fields at either side, and that people travel in the rough roads, only when there is no escape. While the grain is growing the farmers will do their best, by building up stone walls, to keep the animals out of their fields, but just as soon as the harvest is gathered these obstructions go down and the current of traffic resumes the easier course until the winter rains make the mud a worse enemy than the rough stones.

In other places it is often an interesting study to try to decide whether the water flows in the road, or whether people travel in the watercourses. It is something like the insolvable question as to which came first, the hen or the egg. The fact remains that, as a rule, in wet weather and rough country, the traveler will find his horse splashing through a stream of water flowing down the road. The explanation is simple.

There is nowhere any system of drainage, and every man's purpose is to turn the streams of rain water away from his own land. Useful land cannot be wasted for watercourses any more than for roads, and hence the waste lands are devoted to the double purpose, with the resulting confusion as to which is the intruder.

The obscurity of the roads leads to many more or less unpleasant experiences. There are roads so steep and difficult that it is no unusual experience to see a muleteer take hold of his mule's tail as he goes down the mountain path, and by a judicious holding back, help the animal to steady himself under a heavy, awkward load. On the other hand, when he is going up the mountain, the tired muleteer will take hold of the same convenient handle to get a little help for himself in the ascent.

One summer night, Mrs. Nelson and I were belated on the higher slopes of Mount Lebanon. The trail was little more than a path for goats, and was quite unfamiliar

to us. In the dark night, we lost the way more than once, and we were becoming quite exhausted in repeated efforts to regain the path, when, at last, we seemed to have strayed completely, and I could not locate the road at all. We had to take a little rest, and wait for the moon to rise. We sat upon the mountain side, under the shade of fragrant cedars, tired, hungry and thirsty. The surroundings were charming and the dim outlines of forest and mountain beautiful. The night air was refreshing, after an exceptionally hot day; but when one has lost his way, he is not in a condition to appreciate fully the beauties of nature or the charms of his surroundings. As we sat there, gaining some rest, I began to study the outline of the hills, and concluded that the road must lie in a certain curve of the mountains not far away. On investigating I found my impression correct, and we resumed our journey, reaching our destination just as the moon appeared over the highest ridge of the mountains.

On another occasion it was the intelligence of my horse rather than my own which saved me considerable inconvenience. I was belated upon the mountain and overtaken by sunset, some eight miles from my destination. Confident in my horse as well as in myself, I pushed on as rapidly as possible over the rough path. To add to my difficulty, a thick mountain fog settled about me until it was impossible to see the path ten feet ahead. In descending a steep slope, leading my horse, I missed the trail and found myself in the vineyards. I knew that the village was close at hand and anticipated no difficulty in working down to the road. At any rate, it seemed likely that we should arouse the night watchman in the vineyard and it would be his duty to turn us out of the vineyard, exactly what we wished for. We stumbled along, over grapevines and stones, but came no nearer to the road, nor did we disturb the sleeping watchman. After what seemed like endless wandering, though the distance was not

far nor the time long, I came up against a stone wall and could see a path beyond. Getting over this wall was simple, but which way to turn in the road was not clear. I tried the turn to the right, tentatively, not fully convinced myself. My horse yielded reluctantly and walked very slowly indeed over the rough stones. After a few minutes my own doubts increased and I determined to test the horse. Dropping the reins loosely on his neck, I gave him no sign of guidance at all. As soon as he felt the relaxing of pressure on the bits, his head rose, his ears stood erect and he seemed to cast an inquiring glance out of the corner of his eye. When convinced that he was free to choose for himself, he immediately swung around and started at a rapid walk in the opposite direction. In a very few minutes I could see the village lights struggling through the mists, and was soon at my own door.

This same horse gave me another illustration of his intelligence. I was riding

along the carriage road, on the seashore, intending to turn up to one of the mountain villages. There were two roads to this village, and when we came to the first my horse tried to turn up, but was easily held back and started briskly along, as if fully understanding my purpose. When we came to the second road we found that it had been plowed under and that grain several inches high was growing where the path had been. I knew that the road had been moved a short distance so as to pass a khan recently erected. The horse had not yet gone over this altered road and so was puzzled. I left him to his own guidance. When he came to the point where the road had divided, he stopped and looked at the grain, and then went slowly on, looking constantly at the field, until, after about twenty or thirty feet, he decided to make a plunge, and struck directly through the growing grain to where the old road had been at the other edge of the field.

The introduction of railroads and car-

riages throughout the country facilitates travel and business a great deal, but it takes away much of the interest and diversion of getting about from place to place.

Chapter IV

EVANGELISTIC TRIPS

IT was a practice with us for many years to arrange a special evangelistic medical trip in the spring of the year. Sometimes Mrs. Nelson and I would join Dr. Harris in a journey of two or three weeks, and sometimes the doctor and I would go alone. One of the most memorable of these journeys was in the spring of 1893, in the month of May. We had our tent and camp outfit and the large chests of medical supplies carried on mules and were accompanied by our cook, with his portable kitchen packed away under him, and the Syrian assistant of the doctor, so that we made quite a party altogether. We started along the shore north from Tripoli, making our first camp about ten miles out of the city. The next day's journey brought us



LATAKIA BOYS' SCHOOL



TARTOOSE *Crusaders' Church*

to Tartoose on the shore opposite the island of Arvad. Ezek. 27:8. This island lies only a short distance from the shore, but I have never yet been able to reach it because of the violent west wind on each occasion of a visit to Tartoose. The island is wholly covered by the town, which is occupied by sturdy sailors and fishermen. There are many interesting relics of ancient times in Tartoose, though it is possible that many of the coins offered to the credulous public may have been produced recently in the place itself.

At the edge of the town stands a fine Gothic church, whose substantial walls and graceful arches are a pleasure to the eye. The empty windows make one feel lonesome as he approaches the building, and the bare interior speaks of a decadent Christianity that adds to the sadness. But, worst of all, is the minaret crudely built on the corner of the roof, for this is another of the many Christian churches in Turkey which have been transformed into mosques.

At another of our camping places we found, near at hand, an old Roman amphitheater, where it was not difficult to imagine a concourse of pleasure seekers seated on the stone benches watching some exhibition of strength or skill in the arena below. Wherever one goes in Syria, he is reminded of an ancient glory and power, in close and vivid contrast to a present state of decay and weakness.

Our first Sabbath, on this journey, found us at Latakia, where we spent the day with our neighbors and fellow workers of the Reformed Presbyterian mission. This mission was started especially to reach the Nusairiyeh people of north Syria. Because of the persistent interference of the Turkish Government, their work has been greatly hampered and their efforts largely restricted to the training of boys and girls in the boarding institutions in the city, and ministration to the sick in the hospital. It was a great pleasure to have this break in our journey and the pleasant intercourse with

those engaged in the same kind of service as our own, and to have the privilege of speaking to the young people in their schools.

On Monday we went a short distance from the city, pitching our tent near a village of considerable size on the plain some miles back from the sea. As I sat in the moonlight at the door of the tent, a man wearing the white turban of a Moslem scholar approached me. He seated himself near me after a pleasant greeting and we fell into agreeable conversation. After some time, this man took the opportunity, when no one was near enough to overhear him, to ask most earnestly that we should send them a teacher for their children. I was surprised at the request from such a source and turned the conversation so as to make sure that he understood who we were and what kind of schools we conducted. He showed that he understood the matter fully, and that he really desired a Protestant Christian teacher for his town. I then asked him directly, "Are you not a Mos-

lem?" Looking about again, to make sure no one should hear him, he said, "Yes, I am a Moslem now," with an emphasis on the last word which revealed the facts in the case. He was of a Nusairiyeh family but had yielded to the persistent pressure of the government so far as to accept the form of adherence to Islam, though in his heart he hated the system and its followers most cordially.

A long day's ride brought us through the wild and tortuous valley of the Nahr-ul-Kandil, up the slope of Mount Cassius to the town of Kessab, some four thousand feet above the sea, where the Latakia missionaries have their summer homes. It was a most beautiful though rugged ride, and would have been thoroughly enjoyable in good weather. The wild flowers were in full bloom, and every turn in the road brought into view a new combination of varied and bright colors, where the little blossoms clustered amid the green foliage, among the gray rocks. The great drawback to our

enjoyment lay in the fact that for a large part of the distance we rode in a heavy and most unexpected rainfall. We were not prepared for such an experience in the month of May, and so reached our destination soaked and cold. We had been directed to take possession of one of the cottages belonging to the missionaries in Latakia, and it was certainly a most welcome haven. We were able to light a fire in the kitchen stove and spread out our wet garments to dry, while we warmed ourselves in the grateful heat.

It was a disappointment the next day that the top of Cassius was enveloped in heavy cloud, forbidding an ascent. This mountain is about five thousand feet in height, rising directly from the sea, and so is a conspicuous object from every direction and gives an extensive view from its summit. We could tarry but one day, and descended to the old site of Seleucia, at the mouth of the Orontes, and saw some remnants of the old harbor from which Paul

set sail more than once. The Orontes is quite wide and deep near its mouth and we crossed it on just such a wire ferry as I had seen many years before on the Connecticut River in Massachusetts. The gardens of Swadia were most refreshing with their green verdure, cool shade and rich fruit, after a long day's ride in the heat, and again we had the pleasure of missionary fellowship, for our friends of the Reformed Presbyterian mission have a station here also. Another easy stage brought us to old Antioch, so closely associated with the beginning of Christian history. It is not an attractive city in outward appearance and has suffered much at different times from earthquake.

From Antioch we followed the Orontes Valley up to Hamath, where we were once more among our own organized stations. Such journeys give us an acquaintance with the country and the people, which is of the most vital importance in planning for the proper expansion of the work.

Once, on a pleasant summer evening, we were encamped near a Nusairiyeh village. Among those gathered about us were an elderly peasant and his son, a well-built, sturdy youth of seventeen or eighteen years. As he sat before us this young man appeared to be in perfect health and vigor, but when he rose to walk, his awkward gait revealed his misfortune, for both feet were so badly deformed that he walked on his ankles and not on the soles of his feet. The doctor was asked whether this defect could be remedied. After a careful examination the lad was told that the operation would be painful, and that some time would be required, but that if he would come to the hospital, prepared to stay as long as should be necessary, he would be able to come away, walking erect, like other people. The faces brightened at once, and we shared in their pleasure at the prospect of this deliverance. The next morning, however, we were told that the family

had talked over the matter and decided not to have the operation performed. We assured them there should be no expense, but they said it was not the matter of expense. Then we told them of similar cases which had been successfully treated, but they assured us they had no doubt of the doctor's skill. We encouraged the young man to bear the pain for the sake of increased enjoyment in life afterwards, but he said he was not afraid of the pain. What then was the trouble? At last we learned the truth. So long as the lad could show two such clubbed feet, he would be excused from military service; but if they were made straight he would be called to the army; and he would rather go through life a cripple than to give several years of his vigor to service in the Turkish army. And he is no exception.

We were approaching a large town of bigoted people, wondering how we should secure an opening for our message. I was riding slightly in front of the doctor,

occupied with plans for securing access to the people. Suddenly I heard the doctor's voice behind me saying, "Boy, do you want your eye straightened?" On looking back I saw a lad of about fifteen years, with a decidedly crossed eye, beside the doctor's horse. He promptly accepted the offer, and we hastened to dismount and tie our horses. A table in the little roadside café was quickly cleared, while the doctor got out his case of instruments from his saddlebags. The boy was placed on the table and in an incredibly short time the cords were severed so that the eyeball took its proper position, and we were thoroughly advertised. By the time our camp equipage came up, we had been provided with an excellent place to camp, and had nothing to complain of in the reception of the people.

A memorable experience was in the neighborhood of a large village whose gardens are said to be watered by three hundred springs. Whatever the correct

number may be, there is no question about the abundance of water and the luxuriance of the gardens. We had three tents, one for medical clinics and one apiece for our two households, and settled down for a fortnight's work. Every day we had crowds about the tent for medical attention and for religious services. The evenings gave abundant opportunity for work among those who gathered about us after their day's work was done. They were glad to join in the hymns of praise, and listened earnestly to the spoken message and read word. One evening, the boys who gathered about the tent told me that the superintendent of their school was in town and had begun an examination, to be finished the next day. I decided to go to the school the next morning to make the acquaintance of the superintendent and to see what the school was doing. When I arose the following day, I found many of the boys about the tent, and asked them why they were not at school for the ex-

amination. "Oh," they said, "there is no examination to-day. Early this morning, the superintendent, the teachers and the headman of the village took their horses, a large bottle of spirits and a young kid, and went up to the top of the mountain to a famous spring to spend the day in a drinking spree."

One of the pleasantest evenings I remember in my regular routine touring was spent in this same village. We had brought our party to a garden, owned by one of our friends who was always glad to have us make it our headquarters. We had eaten our supper and were seated on the ground, under a high, branching tree into which was trained a huge grapevine. Behind us was a little hut, in which the caretaker slept in stormy weather. At one side was a rude booth where the owner slept during the summer. An oil lantern gave some light. One by one quite a group of neighbors and friends assembled and, after some general conversation, we

sang some hymns. Then I opened the Bible for a little reading, with simple exposition. As I read and talked to them, the row of dark faces was turned toward me with an intentness and eagerness to hear that made me hope they might not see me or hear my words, but hear those words of life spoken so many years ago in Palestine, and see that Face from which alone shines the true light.

We are not always left to do as we please on these trips, for the paternal Turkish Government sometimes takes an unnecessary interest in our plans and shows an excessive concern for our safety. We had crossed a rugged section of the mountains and come down to a walled town, which is a government center. Here we camped near the town and were promptly favored with a call from officials, sent by the governor to find out who we were. We paid a formal call on his Excellency and were allowed to remain quietly as long as we desired. When we broke camp a polite

message came from the governor, asking where we were going and offering a guard and escort. We returned a grateful acknowledgment of his courtesy, but assured him that we were familiar with the roads and would not trouble him to send an escort. It was only after some difficulty that we succeeded in getting away alone. We learned afterwards that we were followed, and that, in accordance with instructions from headquarters, word was sent from place to place to keep watch of us. At one large town we had large crowds about our camp and large audiences for evening services for several days, when suddenly there was a change and no one came near us. Apparently the sick were all healed and all interest in singing and conversation had ceased. It developed that word had been sent to the nearest government center, and orders had come back at once, not to interfere with our comfort but to notify the people to have nothing to do with us. At one of these places, which

were all occupied by Nusairiyeh and Ismaeliyeh people, Mrs. Nelson was talking with some of the women about religion. They said, "Do Christian women have any religion?" When assured that we believe religion to be for everyone, whether male or female, rich or poor, wise or ignorant, they replied: "It is not so with us. A woman with us can have no share in religion. If one of us should accidentally overhear the men talking about religious beliefs, so that she unintentionally learned some religious doctrine, she ought to acknowledge it and be put to death. And it is right to be so, for a woman must know nothing of religion."

On another occasion, quite a party of us stopped to spend the night in one of these towns. While I was busy with arrangements for the night other members of the party went to look about the little castle at the edge of the town. Our presence was reported to the acting governor. Unfortunately he was a man of surly disposition and anxious

to magnify his office. He demanded our Turkish passports, which he had a technical right to do. Unfortunately some of the party had failed to provide themselves with these documents as they were seldom called for. It gave our little governor a chance and he used it, insisting that he must send us to Hamath, practically under guard, but nominally under military protection. We were intending to go to Hamath, but not directly, and so it was finally agreed that the horseman go with us to Mahardeh where we were to lodge, and accompany us the following day to Hamath. When we started out the next morning, it was ludicrous to see the haughty airs of this soldier who was sent with us. He acted as if he really believed these foreigners were committed to his absolute control and carried his head very high. Before going many miles we had succeeded, by pleasant conversation, in limbering him up considerably, and by noon, when we stopped for luncheon, he

displayed his power in our behalf by ordering the villagers to serve us in every way possible. By evening, when we entered Mahardeh, he was quite cringing in his servility, for now he realized that he was alone and we were among friends, so it was worth while to be genial and submissive. When I informed him that I was not going with the party the next day, he claimed to be greatly terrified and begged me most humbly not to subject him to such peril. "For," said he, "the number of foreigners is mentioned in the governor's letter, and if I do not produce the full number, I shall be held responsible." I said, "Be that as it may, I must stay here over Sunday and on Monday morning I will follow and report myself to his Excellency if necessary." He went away, apparently in much uncertainty. I knew, however, that the matter was a mere formality and would bring no risk either to him or to me; and so it proved, for the governor took no interest in the matter at all.

On a warm summer evening, Dr. Harris and I rode up to the sheik's house in a village I have never visited before or since. As strangers we were welcomed to the public room. It was soon discovered that a doctor was present, and immediately all who were diseased came about us. It was a marvel to see men lie down before this stranger with perfect confidence and allow him to cut about their eyes or put drops in them. It does happen, alas, too often, that this credulity costs them dear, for many an eye has been ruined by conscienceless quacks who trade on the simplicity of the people. It is a pleasure, however, to see them place themselves in the hands of the skillful and honest missionary physician, who will help them, if possible, or tell them truthfully if there is no remedy. At sunset a large dish of wheat, boiled with some meat, was brought out, and cakes of barley bread placed about it. All who were present were bidden to partake, and we did the best we could to

satisfy our hunger. After a social evening we spread our beds and made ready for sleep, if possible. As I lay on my bed, I could hear those who sat about discussing us. They told of the doctor's famous skill and what he had done there before them. I was glad to find that I held the humble position of doctor's assistant in their estimation. But I could not help wondering then and since about that village. So far as I know that is the only missionary visit ever made there. Is it enough?



ALEPPO MINARET

Chapter V

ALEPPO

IN 1893 a plan was developed in the mission to extend our sphere of labor so as to include the city of Aleppo, which had been occupied many years before by the mission and then left because of the exigencies of the work and lack of forces. It was a four days' journey from our nearest outstation, and hence not easy to care for; but as Tripoli Station was the nearest part of the mission, Aleppo was placed under our direction.

Aleppo is one of the largest cities in Syria, and a most important commercial center. It is nearly the most northern point for the use of the Arabic language, as Turkish becomes the general medium of communication one day's journey farther north. Being so near the Turkish district,

there are many Turkish-speaking people in Aleppo, but the city as a whole is essentially an Arabic-speaking place. The American Board had a Turkish congregation connected with their mission and maintained church and school work in Aleppo for the Turkish-speaking strangers resident in the city. There was the most cordial welcome from these missionaries to our proposal to organize work for the Arabic-speaking population. Before making my first visit of supervision to Aleppo it was arranged by correspondence that Mr. Sanders of Aintab, the missionary in charge of that district, should meet me and spend several days in conference as to the arrangement of details of our interlocking work. It had been proposed most kindly that we should hold our Arabic services in the premises of the Turkish congregation.

In many ways that first journey to Aleppo was a unique experience. It was a venture into a region of country wholly

new to me, and involved planning for a new department of service. There were two ways to reach Aleppo, one wholly by land, involving a somewhat dangerous ride from Hamath for four days; the other by sea to Alexandretta, and thence by horseback over a carriage road to Aleppo. It was decided to take this latter course, though all subsequent visits were made the other way. After gaining all the information I could before leaving home, I took the steamer to Alexandretta, where I landed on Monday morning. At once I began my search for a riding animal, and at length secured a horse guaranteed to be swift and of easy gait, whose owner promised to see me in Aleppo by the evening of the third day. Delayed by those who wished to accompany us, it was past noon before we set out on the road. It was not long before I discovered that the ease had been left out in the structure of my horse, and that any speed he may have had once was well-nigh worn out. It was

clear that I should have to work my passage, but my courage held out.

We pressed up the mountain slope and crossed the ridge in good time, having many beautiful views back over the dark blue Mediterranean. Mount Cassius lifted its rocky head five thousand feet, directly out of the sea, to the south, showing where the Orontes empties into the sea at old Seleucia. After passing the summit of the range we dropped down rapidly to the Antioch plain, having the lake of Antioch in full view before us. By sunset we had reached the place intended as our first halt, thirty-seven kilometers from the shore. I found no place of entertainment but a bare inn where I could set up my camp bed and sleep. There was no food to be had for love or money and so I had to depend on the scant supplies I had brought with me in my saddlebags.

The second day's ride was much longer than the first, as we kept to the saddle for twelve hours, notwithstanding the entreaty

of my companions to break the journey earlier. I reminded them of the pledge to reach Aleppo on the third day, and so kept on until dusk. We had left the carriage road for a more direct trail and stopped for the night in a small, desolate village. There was no decent shelter to be found and so I gladly set up my bed on the threshing floor, and slept under the starry sky. I inquired for milk, eggs, bread, cheese, anything in the way of food, offering ample pay for anything edible. After much persuasion the people were induced to burrow in the straw pile on the threshing floor from which they produced a watermelon. This was refreshing at least, and helped to wash down my bread, which was getting rather dry, as I did not like to use much water in this swampy region. Long before dawn we were again on the road and pushed steadily ahead over ridge after ridge, until, in the middle of the afternoon, the city of Aleppo broke on our sight, a most refreshing vision. In one of the

valleys near Aleppo the traveler cannot fail to notice many heaps of small stones, evidently placed there to mark certain spots. The place is called the valley of the slain, and each pile indicates where some victim has fallen.

The appearance of Aleppo as one approaches it from the west is not unpleasing, for it is the first well-built town seen after leaving the coast. The houses are built of white limestone and the gardens about the city lend a touch of green, most refreshing after the barren country left behind. At first sight the designation of Aleppo as Haleb-es-Shahba—Aleppo the Gray—seems most appropriate. It is a pity to detract from the more poetic explanation of the title. Old tradition says that Abraham had his encampment at the site of Aleppo for a long time, and was recognized throughout the region for his wealth and generosity. He had set apart for the use of the poor the milk from a certain gray cow in his herd, and hence

some one was always on the watch at evening. As soon as the gray cow came forward, this watchman would shout at the top of his voice, "Haleb es Shahba," which means, "He has milked the gray cow." Hence the city, which later grew up at this spot, was called Haleb-es-Shahba, or Aleppo.

I shall never forget a conversation connected with that journey. My comrades were all Moslems, and as we jogged on, hour after hour, during those three days, there were opportunities for conversation on many topics. One day I asked one of them who was a religious teacher, what his doctrine had to say as to the fate of non-Moslem infants who died in infancy. I was surprised to find how closely his view parallels our own Christian view of infant salvation. He answered at once that they are all saved through the intercession of Mohammed.

On reaching the city I sought a hotel, in order to remove the soil of travel before

hunting up our friends in this strange city. I was in the midst of making myself presentable when a loud knock at my door was followed immediately by its opening, and a rough Turkish police officer made his appearance. Without a word or suggestion of apology, he began a series of questions as to my name, residence and occupation. I let him exhaust his list of questions and then asked, as quietly as possible, whether he would like to look over my Turkish passport, which was required of all in those days. He seemed to be so completely taken aback at my evident lack of awe for himself, and surprised to meet a person who was prepared in accordance with the law, that he could scarcely stammer out in reply, "Why, have you a passport?" "Certainly," I replied. "Here it is, with all the information you need." He sat down most meekly and copied off the items he needed and took his departure in a really polite manner.

As this was my first visit to Aleppo,

everything seemed strange to me, except in so far as all oriental cities have a measure of resemblance. As I was met also by Mr. Sanders, a missionary in charge of established work, I found it natural to expect to be dependent on him for everything. It came thus as a surprise to have him turn to me, in the street, to act as interpreter. He spoke Turkish, but my Arabic was far more necessary and serviceable in general intercourse.

These experiences impressed it upon me most vividly that Aleppo is thoroughly an Arabic-speaking city, and that the work should be in organic connection with the evangelical work in other parts of Syria. The Turkish congregation is a natural member of the Cilicia Union and should affiliate with the churches of the north, but the Arabic evangelical work belongs with the organizations under the care of our mission in Syria. For four years this arrangement was continued and we maintained Arabic services with a Syrian

preacher and a day school with a Syrian teacher. Each year two missionary visits were made, the missionaries in Tripoli alternating in this duty. It was difficult to carry on the work at such long range. In 1897 a heavy cut in our appropriations made it necessary to consider every possible method of retrenchment. At the same time the English Presbyterians were opening a station in Aleppo for work among the Jews, and it seemed best, all things considered, to ask our English friends to relieve us of this responsibility, and assume the care of the work for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews through the medium of Arabic, in Aleppo. Thus our official connection with the work in Aleppo ceased, but it has never passed from our minds that some day an Arabic-speaking evangelical church in Aleppo should become a member of our Syrian Presbyterian organization. Now that the railroad has brought Aleppo within six hours' ride from Hamath, the problem has assumed a new

form and we may hope for a renewal of friendly affiliation.

Such a city as Aleppo, with about two hundred and fifty thousand people and increasing commercial importance, demands much of the missionary organizations. The famous Constantinople Bagdad railway of the Germans passes through Aleppo. A branch line connects with the Mediterranean at Alexandretta. The French system from Beirut ends in Aleppo, giving direct connection with Damascus, Beirut and Tripoli. The work of the American Board, being at present in Turkish, reaches only a small part of the population. The English mission places its emphasis on work for the Jews and has ample scope in that part of the population. There remains the vast bulk of the whole population, with Arabic as their language, looking naturally to the American mission in Syria for help and guidance. The large Moslem population and the numerous nominal Christians deserve the attention of a

resident American missionary to organize aggressive and effective work. Shall we wait longer before pressing on in this direction?

Aleppo has been chosen by the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A. as a place where a building should be erected and a permanent secretary established. Should we fall behind the Y.M.C.A.? Whenever the American Presbyterian Church says the word and furnishes the men and the money, I am sure the Syrian mission will be ready to send one of its members forward to this new frontier. God forbid that another quarter century should pass before this is fulfilled.

Chapter VI

NEW STATIONS AND BUILDINGS

IT has been my privilege to watch from the beginning the growth and development of three prosperous churches in the territory of Tripoli Presbytery. Each one has been marked by peculiarities that render it especially interesting. In the early years of my acquaintance with the church in Homs, I heard frequently of evangelistic visits on the part of the young men of the church to various villages in the plain east of the city — especially to one large village about two miles southeast of us. The people of this village are of the Syrian or Jacobite church, and have no little familiarity with the Bible and a really religious disposition. Our young men from Homs used to go out in small bands of two or more, with their gospels

and hymn books in their pockets. If they met a friendly reception, they would go into some house, where those who were interested would gather together and a simple service or friendly discussion would be held. If no one asked them to come in, they would seek a place in the public square where people were gathered together, and sing a hymn or read a passage to open the way for discussion. In such cases there was danger of an exhibition of hostility on the part of those who were unfriendly to the evangelical doctrine. It happened more than once that these faithful messengers were driven out of town, pursued with stones as well as reviling. Such treatment, however, could not suppress the truth, and a strong church has grown up from the seed thus sown amid hostile persecution.

There was a most interesting old priest in this town of Feiruzeh who received the truth into his heart, but never had the courage to leave the old church, though he

was known to be at heart an evangelical believer. He sought books on the evangelical doctrine and studied them earnestly, and sometimes attended the Protestant service, being present at least once on a sacramental occasion. He openly taught his people the folly of auricular confession and priestly absolution, saying to them: "If you wish to come to me and tell me of your sins, so that I may help you and pray with you to God for forgiveness, I am at your service; but I am a sinner like you and we all have access to one Saviour. I cannot forgive your sins, but will gladly pray for you and with you."

There had been some inquiry about the truth on the part of a few people in the village of El Yazidiyeh. In my first visit to the place we pitched a tent on the threshing floor outside the village. Much curiosity in our coming was shown, and some opportunity given to strengthen the purpose of those who were inclined to the truth. At length a teacher was stationed

there and a simple school opened. One or two of the people had joined the church in a neighboring village, but the sacrament had never been administered in the town itself. Several were ready to make a public profession of their faith in Christ, and it seemed that the time had come to begin the full life of the little church, by administering the sacrament on the spot. Plans were arranged for an evening service in the schoolroom, and a good company was gathered in the rudely furnished, dark little room. There was much disturbance outside when it was known what was in progress. One zealous defender of the truth sprang from his seat and rushed out in a most militant manner to disperse the noisy crowd without. While the little service was in progress, it was not always easy to keep the attention of all, on account of the noisy beating of tin cans near by; and some pebbles were thrown in at the windows. The service was completed, however, and this was the beginning of

what has proved to be one of our most vigorous churches. There is now a simple church building, which is always well filled at regular services, and new members are ready to come forward at almost every communion service.

The village of Hakoor is memorable, not so much because of hostile opposition to the work as because of the apparently feeble instrument used of God for the establishment of the church. A blind man, of keen and inquiring mind, lived in this village and made a precarious living by keeping a little shop. He was respected by his neighbors for his integrity of character, and trusted by the church authorities for his fidelity to church duties. He began to hear something of the new evangelical doctrine and though ready to investigate, was strong in his opposition and slow to yield to the new faith. When once thoroughly convinced, however, his very honesty of nature made him accept the truth and declare himself for the Protestant

view. The bishop sent for him, in order to recall him from his error. He told the bishop that he was convinced that the teaching and practice of the Greek Church were not in harmony with the gospel, and that he had decided to follow the teaching of God rather than that of men, but that he was ready to hear anything the bishop had to say to convince him that he was mistaken. The bishop began to read him a controversial tract recently prepared against the Protestant doctrine. Our blind friend interrupted him, saying: "I have heard all that and can give you an outline of the whole argument. It does not convince me and so, if you have nothing stronger, it will do no good." The bishop then reviled him, comparing his course to that of Judas toward Christ, and so cast him off. The blind man went home, glad to suffer abuse for the truth. He gathered around him a group of neighbors who studied the gospel under his guidance, and a little church has grown up in that vil-

lage, to which he ministered regularly for a year, when no other preacher could be found. The little band has been full of zeal and has raised the money to build a little chapel in which they worship and in which their children are taught.

By means which are insufficient in the sight of men, in spite of opposition from those who are hostile to the truth, God's word continues to bear fruit and the gospel light continues to spread throughout the world.

The missionary is met, in his periodic visitation of the outstations, with every conceivable request and complaint. I am often asked to mend a clock or a watch. I have been appealed to to adjust a coffee mill which did not work right. Matrimonial and family difficulties must often be arranged. I have told the people that there is one complaint I am always glad to hear, and that is to the effect that the place of worship is too small for the regular attendants. When I first went to the

village of Minyara, the services were held in a small room about twenty by twenty-five feet. There was room to spare, though not a great deal. In a few years it became necessary to plan for enlargement. This was accomplished by securing a piece of land adjacent to the building, taking out the end wall and extending the room so as to increase its capacity about two thirds. The growth of the congregation was so rapid and steady that this enlargement was not completed before the room was again inadequate. An appeal was made to a generous friend in St. Louis, and five hundred dollars were sent for the Minyara chapel. A further piece of land was secured, and plans made for an entirely new and larger building. The outline is rectangular, and the flat roof is supported by three rows of arches, resting on six pillars. This building has been ample for the accommodation of this growing church for many years, though it is often well filled and would be far from

sufficient, were not half the members in America.

In the city of Homs the old church had a flat dirt roof supported by two heavy arches, which made the room seem dark and contracted. The regular congregations taxed the capacity of the building, and the roof timbers were showing signs of weakness which would necessitate an early renewal. The pastor of the church began to work earnestly for a reconstruction of the roof, with an enlargement of the audience room. There was a little vacant space at one end of the building which if it were inclosed would increase the capacity about forty per cent. At the same time the heavy arches could be removed and a galvanized iron roof placed over the enlarged building. But this would cost a considerable sum, and how was that to be raised? The people thought they could not raise more than two hundred dollars. The same friend in St. Louis, who had provided for the Minyara chapel, sent another five

hundred dollars, and we made this proposition to the church: "After the church spends two hundred and fifty dollars, the mission will put in five hundred, but if any more is needed the church must provide it." They went to work with a will. When the dirt from the old roof was to be carried out they organized a regular church bee. All the men of the church came together, the pastor, the doctor, the teacher, the merchant, each one taking one of the rough baskets in which they carry dirt, and all together got the whole pile removed at a considerable saving to the building fund. Before the work was finished the church had raised and expended quite as much money as they had received from outside. This enlarged place of worship has again become too small, and its further enlargement is a pressing problem.



HADETH SUMMER HOME



ABU MAROON, THE HADETH CARPENTER

Chapter VII

CAMPING LIFE

AT the close of a tour one spring, Mrs. Nelson and I were compelled to reach home on a fixed date, because of the expected arrival of guests. The weather had been unpropitious and the rains heavy for the season of the year. At one point we had been shut in for several days by a snowstorm, and all the rivers were unusually high. We had a broad plain to cross, intersected by three rivers which must be forded. The rain had been persistent, but ceased on the day we were obliged to start for home. We reached the first river after about an hour's ride, and crossed it successfully, the water coming near to the girths of the saddles. The second river was reached and crossed without serious difficulty, but from there onward the entire plain seemed to be under water, and our

horses splashed along through water and mud without interruption. Toward sundown we neared the last stream, and congratulated ourselves that just beyond it we should find the carriage road and a dry place for the night. Our road lay through a wretched little Nusairiyeh village, just before reaching the river, and as we passed the houses we were hailed by many voices assuring us that the river could not be forded with safety. I did not believe this at first, thinking it merely a ruse to compel us to spend the night in their village. Such an event would be more or less profitable to the people who would provide our necessities for a consideration, even if there was no thought of robbery, which was quite possible also. We waited for our muleteers, as they were familiar with the stream and would be able to decide whether we could cross or not. Their verdict agreed with the statement of the villagers and so we were obliged to negotiate for a lodging place.

After some parley we were allowed to stop in the sheik's public room. There was not a dry spot about the town, but by riding up close to the door, we were able to dismount on a large log, and then jump across a mud puddle to the doorsill, and so enter the room assigned to us. It would be hard to make anyone who has not seen such houses realize what this room was like. It was about twenty feet square, with one door and no window. The lack of this latter was partly supplied by the fact that the wall of the house had tumbled in at one corner, leaving a ragged hole through which light and air entered freely. The floor was of dirt and at two levels. One half, which was used to accommodate people, was reached by a high step and was comparatively dry. In the middle of this higher floor was a smoldering wood fire, from which the smoke had colored the roof timbers a shiny black. The lower half of the floor was on a level with the ground outside or even a little lower, and was decidedly

muddy. This section was for the accommodation of horses and cattle. When our party was all inside, so that we could take a census, we found that the occupants of the room for the night were to be, besides myself and my wife, the three muleteers, a cook and a Syrian maid accompanying us to the city. We were in the higher part of the room. In the other part were two horses, four mules, a goat and a calf. These were the visible animals, and anyone who has traveled under similar conditions will appreciate what is meant when I say there were myriads of other creatures which made themselves known through other senses than sight.

The sheik was seated by the fire, warming himself, and gave us a scant welcome. We took such a supper as we were able to provide in the circumstances, and prepared to be as comfortable as possible for the night. One of the men had been suffering from malaria and so I prepared for him, and others in the party, a dose of quinine,

after the fatigue and exposure of the day. The sheik immediately asked what it was, and desired a dose for himself and the other men present. It was the same principle as that which makes bargain sales attractive. Something is going cheap or gratis, and so I must have it, whether I need it or not. Doses were given out to all who wished for it, for a few grains of quinine seldom go amiss in this country. Conversation was not very lively, about that smoky fire, as we were tired and there were not many topics of common interest. At length our cook thought he would facilitate matters a little. He had lived with foreigners long enough to know the advantage of appealing to the gallantry of men toward the ladies, so he said in his most ingratiating tone to the sheik, "The lady is tired and would like to go to sleep." "Well, let her do so, there is no objection." With a scarcely restrained chuckle, the cook subsided for a time and then tried again, saying this time, "The Effendi (gentleman)

is tired and would be much obliged if you would leave so that he may sleep." This was a different proposition and seemed to meet something of a response. Shortly, one of those present got up and went over into the corner of the room where he spread out his cloak and proceeded to his Moslem devotions. When he was through, another followed him with equal deliberation, and we began to doubt whether we should sleep before morning. At length the last one withdrew and we were left to ourselves, including the attendants and animals mentioned before. We spread our camp bedsteads in the driest part of the room and made ready to sleep. It was not long, however, before the rain began to fall, and very soon the roof began to leak over our heads. We spread rubber coats over ourselves and raised our umbrellas over our heads and tried to see the humor of the situation. At early dawn we were up and packed our goods for a new start. The river had fallen sufficiently in the night to

permit our crossing, though with some difficulty. On the farther bank we found a party of people waiting until the stream should subside sufficiently to allow them to cross with their small donkeys.

Every summer it is necessary to make a change from the heat of the plain to the more bracing air of the mountains. This is not a vacation, for the missionary's work goes on with little variation, wherever he may be, but it involves a change of base and the setting up of a simple household in different surroundings. In those earlier years the mountain life was exceedingly simple and the means of transportation most crude. The village of Hadeth is accessible from Tripoli and in a beautiful situation, directly opposite the famous grove of Cedars of Lebanon. It lies on a ridge in the mountains at an elevation of some forty-five hundred feet above the sea. More than one season have we spent in the house of old Abu Maroon, the village carpenter. The house consisted of four

large rooms, opening on a long, arched porch which extended the full length of the house. The floors were of dirt and the walls roughly plastered with mud. We rented three of these rooms, the owners occupying the fourth. The partitions between the rooms were made of brushwood, plastered on both sides with mud. These partitions extended only about three fourths of the way to the roof, leaving ample space above for ventilation and conversation. The uncovered twigs and small branches at the top of these partitions made an attractive, artistic feature, very pleasing to many of our visitors. One of the regular household duties in those mountain houses was the renewing of the mud on the floors. Every week or two it was necessary to remove everything from the rooms, spread a fresh coat of watery mud over the floor, and polish it off with a smooth, round stone kept for the purpose. We could then anticipate reasonable freedom from fleas for another period.

The only way to reach a summer resort was on horseback, over very rough bridle paths. All furniture had to be transported by mules in like manner; folding chairs and tables, camping utensils and necessary bedding had to be made into suitable bundles; indispensable supplies had to be provided and mules secured to carry all to the mountains. It was a long, hard day's ride and the party was sure to be pretty tired the first night of arrival, but the renewed vigor in the fresh mountain air gave new strength for the resumption of life on the hotter plain in the fall and it was well worth all the trouble it cost.

When it is possible to secure a week or two for real rest, there is no more delightful way to accomplish the purpose than to make a camp in the cedar grove. This clump of trees lies in a basin in the higher mountains, about six thousand feet above sea level. On the east and north, and somewhat on the south, the mountains rise about this great amphitheater to about

four thousand feet more, being the highest mountains anywhere in Syria. Large patches of snow lie perpetually on these highest mountains, but the slopes are bare, having no trees nor shrubs beyond clumps of thorns and scanty grass where the melting snows afford some moisture. Flocks of goats range over these barren slopes, gaining a scanty subsistence. In the days of Solomon and Hiram of Tyre these mountains were probably covered with cedar forests. Nowadays only small sections are so covered, though on many of the bare heights the people still dig up the old stumps of great cedar trees, which they sell for fuel in the cities.

On the entire mountain range there is left no single grove of really ancient cedars, except the one of which I have spoken, known among the people as the "Cedars of the Lord" or simply as "The Cedars." It is impossible to speak with certainty of the age of these great trees, but from what we know of their slow growth and the size

of many of the trunks, it is safe to place their age in the thousands of years. There are more than four hundred trees in the grove and their reputed sanctity has protected them from destruction. Some forty years ago one of the governors of Mount Lebanon had a wall built inclosing the grove and a guardian appointed. This affords protection from goats, and now a number of small trees are growing up to perpetuate the grove in generations to come. If proper steps were taken for reforesting the whole of Lebanon, there would be a great improvement in many ways, and the agricultural wealth of the country would be greatly increased.

To establish a camp among these grand old trees is a most delightful way to spend a short vacation. The silence of the nights under the spreading branches; the fragrance of the foliage; the soothing sigh of the breeze among the tree tops; the beautiful and ever-changing colors on the higher mountain slopes; the beautiful outlook to

the west over the narrow valley out to the distant Mediterranean; all these influences tend to quiet the tired nerves, refresh the exhausted brain and draw the discouraged heart back to quiet and rest in the hand of the Master.

Chapter VIII

PERSECUTION

LATE one afternoon as I was sitting in my study, the doorbell rang and a young man from Hamath entered, showing every token of great excitement and fatigue. He had just arrived on the diligence from Homs. As soon as he was sufficiently composed to give me a clear story, he told me that the preacher in Hamath had been suddenly arrested by the local authorities, and after somewhat rough treatment, had been sent under guard to Damascus, a journey of five days on horseback, as it was before the era of railroads. So far as I could learn from my informant, the case was one of flagrant persecution, with no culpable occasion behind it. The first thing to be done was to quiet the excitement of our friend, who had brought

the word himself rather than trust a written message. Giving him a chance to rest, I made hasty arrangements for a night ride to Beirut. The moon would rise about ten o'clock and I arranged for two riding horses to be ready for us before midnight. We set out together through the olive orchards under the witchery of the moonlight. It would have been a pleasant experience under other circumstances. The road follows the general line of the seashore, at times close to the breaking waves, and again rising on a rocky bluff at whose base the blue sea keeps up an incessant murmur. In the silent night the play of advancing and retreating waves gives a constantly varied effect of light and sound.

Before noon we reached Beirut and consulted with various missionary friends and the consuls of America, England and Germany, who take an interest in matters affecting the Protestants in Turkey. It was decided that our Hamath friend should go at once to Damascus, while I awaited

word from him whether my presence was needed. The following day a telegram agreed upon between us brought the brief message, "Better come." The old French diligence in those days made the trip across Mount Lebanon to Damascus in something over thirteen hours, a rather fatiguing day. On the evening of my arrival we had a conference of the immediate circle of friends, and the arrested man himself was among us. This was a thoroughly characteristic incident, under Turkish administration, and so merits a word of explanation. During the journey from Hamath to Damascus, friendly relations had been established between the prisoner and his escort, so that the latter were willing to accommodate their prisoner in any reasonable measure. It was agreed upon that they should not announce their arrival nor report to their superiors for a few days until the prisoner secured a little rest and made arrangements for his defense. Hence I was informed by our friend himself that he would not

arrive in Damascus "officially" for several days.

It is needless to go into all the details of this event but the animating cause of the incident has its humorous as well as its enlightening side. Some time before, our friend had wished to compliment the man who was at the time governor of Hamath. Being of a literary turn he wrote a flattering poem to present on a suitable occasion. Indiscreetly he worked into his poem serious reflections on another man who was the governor's enemy and who held a similar post at a distance. The governor was so pleased that the poem was printed for distribution and a copy reached the hands of the other man, who was naturally not pleased with it. In the subsequent shifting of appointments this very man became governor of Hamath, and found a way to vent his spite at the poet.

When looked at from a safe perspective, most of the so-called persecution in Syria has a predominant touch of humor in it.

The most convenient and suitable place for Tripoli missionary families to spend their summers is in the village of Hadeth close to the summer seat of the Maronite patriarch. The whole valley is considered sacred, and hence strongly guarded against the pollution of any heretical evangelical influences. For a number of years the ecclesiastics tried, in every way they could devise, to make us trouble and to prevent our securing houses in the town, or finding any comfort when we did so. During one summer they were especially aggressive and seemed determined to be rid of us. The priests warned everyone against serving us in any way, and against selling us anything to eat. For a few days our servant had to go to a neighboring town to buy supplies. The woman who had been doing our washing sent word she could not come. A special conclave assembled and summoned our landlord, threatening all sorts of vengeance if he did not turn us out. They said that a mob would destroy his house

over our heads. The poor old man came to me in great fear, knowing the unscrupulousness of his opponents, and thinking they might get up some false accusation against him in the government and cast him into prison or subject him to needless loss or expense. I assured him they would not dare touch us or attack his property and that the whole plan was to frighten us into leaving town, if possible. I told him that we were to leave on a certain day in October. When the hostile party learned this, they drew up a pledge that the Americans were to be expelled from town on the day I had indicated, under a forfeit of fifty pounds from the landlord to the local church. He was also required to go to the church and apologize publicly to the people, kiss the floor of the church in front of the picture of the Virgin, and pay a pound into the treasury. He was then accepted as in good and regular standing, and all waited for the appointed day. Unfortunately I did not know of this until it was too late

to change our plans. On the day appointed we left town with our household goods and as we rode away we heard the church bells ringing out a peal of rejoicing to celebrate the cleansing of the town. Times have changed now, and the same priest who led in the opposition then will call upon us and crack jokes about the times gone by.

Chapter IX

EMIGRATION

THE period of my life in Syria has witnessed the rapid development of emigration. In former days there was very little travel among the people, the marriage of a girl to a man in a neighboring village being a notable and rather rare occurrence. It was no unusual thing for a person to spend his whole life without ever going so much as ten miles from his birthplace. I was entertained for supper one night at the home of a wealthy Moslem in Homs. The old father of our host was present and I entered into conversation with him as to the experiences of his long life. He told me that he had taken four wives, as permitted by Moslem law. He had twenty sons who had all grown up and married in Homs. He said that his grand-

sons numbered about a hundred, all of whom he knew by face, though he might not be able to fit the right name to each, at first sight. Knowing him to be quite wealthy, I asked whether he had traveled much. My first question was whether he had been to the seashore, some sixty-five miles away at Tripoli. He had never seen the sea. "Have you been to Damascus?" This would appeal more to a devout Moslem, since the sea is always associated more or less with the unholy foreigners of Christian faith, while Damascus is an ancient seat of Moslem power and glory. "No, I have never seen Damascus," was his answer. "Well, surely you have been to Hamath?" This is only thirty miles distant. "No," he said, "I never went to Hamath." "Have you passed your whole life right here in Homs?" "Once," he said, "I made a journey out among the Arabs of the desert, to buy sheep." That was the extent of traveling by an intelligent, well-to-do Moslem of the old school.

Some thirty or forty years ago a change began among the people and a few enterprising men sought more favorable opportunities for making a living in foreign lands. Many of them were successful and encouraged others to follow them, until now the most profitable business of the steamships calling at Syrian ports is the carrying of emigrants back and forth. The weekly exit is numbered by the hundreds, and large numbers also return from time to time. Few of those who return to Syria remain for any length of time, for, having once tasted the liberty and experienced the opportunities of life in western lands, they are no longer content to fall back into the old, slow, unprofitable methods of the Orient. A notable change has also come over the character of the emigration in another respect. At first it was only the more enterprising, vigorous young men who went abroad to seek their fortunes. Now whole families go together. Women and girls emigrate as freely as men. At first it was

only Christians who sought to improve their condition in Christian lands; now Moslems and Nusairiyeh go as freely as do the Christians.

At first this emigration was a blind flight from poverty and oppressive conditions at home, with little understanding of the places to which the emigrants were going. They placed themselves literally in the hands of the steamship agents in Marseilles. Taking passage from Syria to Marseilles, they were shipped on from there in bunches, according to the advantage of the agent into whose hands they fell. They might be sent to Argentine, while the friends to whom they were going were in Massachusetts. They might be sent to Sierra Leone or to Capetown, but it was all America in their minds. The simple idea of geography in those days seemed to divide the world into two parts, Syria and America. The common people know far better now, for they discuss intelligently the conditions of life and business in the various parts of the

world. Syrians are to be found in every one of the United States, from Maine to Florida, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They are in Alaska, the Sandwich Islands and the Philippines. They are in every country of Central and South America, in the West Indies and in all parts of Africa. In many places they have bought property and made permanent business arrangements.

In the early years there were many indications of their lack of experience in money matters and general business methods. One man in Brazil had accumulated quite a sum of money and wished to return home. He did not understand the simplicity of taking a draft on London from the bank, and was averse to parting with good gold for a mere slip of paper. He changed all his money into English sovereigns and put the whole nine hundred into a belt, which he secured around his body under his clothes. He did not dare remove his treasure day or night during the weeks of

journey, enduring the weight and pressure until he reached home. He was then taken sick and nearly lost his life from kidney trouble induced by this folly.

Another young man in Mexico started home by way of New York. He knew that English and French gold are current in Syria, and was sure that American gold was every bit as good. So he exchanged his money for American gold coin. It came to my attention through a man who came to me with a twenty-dollar gold piece, and asked what it was worth. When I told him its real value, he showed such surprise as to arouse my curiosity. It appeared that this coin, with one like it, had been given as betrothal token for his daughter. Subsequently the engagement was broken by the young man and so, in accordance with oriental custom, the token was forfeited. The father, wishing to realize on the coin, took it to a local goldsmith who pretended to examine it carefully and then offered three dollars for it.

The father was disappointed at this appraisal and indignant that his daughter should have been rated so low. The reaction, when he found the coin to be worth nearly seven times as much as he had been informed, was almost too much for him.

One matter connected incidentally with the emigration has been the call for assistance in handling money for those abroad. In the earlier years there were no adequate banking facilities outside of Beirut and so the people began to send back money to their families through the hands of friends who were merchants living in the various seaport towns. In several cases unscrupulous men took advantage of the general ignorance in money matters to secure abnormal profits to themselves, and in more than one instance, through fraudulent bankruptcy, cheated the people out of hundreds of pounds. Those who were in any way connected with the American missionaries began sending their money to us, and at last we were obliged to conduct

quite an extensive banking business. In some years drafts for several thousand pounds would come to me in sums ranging from two or three pounds to several hundred at a time. These were to be paid out to various relatives or to be held on deposit until the owners' return. On one occasion I opened a registered letter from Brazil and found in it a draft on London for ten pounds. On reading the letter I found it to be written by a man I did not know, in behalf of another stranger, and that the money was to be paid to an entire stranger in a village I had never seen. It was enough for the sender to know that his money was in the hands of an American missionary.

On one occasion a returned emigrant came to my associate with a kerchief full of silver and gold coins. He asked the privilege of depositing this with the mission until he needed it. As it was evidently a considerable sum, he was advised to put it in the bank so as to secure some interest,

but he preferred to feel sure that his money was safe, even though it earned nothing. Neither did he see any necessity of waiting until the money should be counted and a regular entry made of it in the books. It was enough that the missionary had charge of it. This open account remained with us a number of years and sometimes amounted to two thousand dollars.

A man sent me from Venezuela a draft for a hundred pounds, charging me to let no one know of it, but to hold the money until he should come. After a long interval I learned that his wife was thinking of going to join him, since no word had been received. I succeeded in dissuading her, as I knew he was planning to come home and they might miss each other in mid-ocean. The return was delayed, and before he arrived his funds in my hands amounted to six or seven hundred pounds.

The volume of emigration is growing every year and is taking away the strength of the land, but better banking facilities

have relieved us of the financial cares formerly carried. The director of the Ottoman Bank in Tripoli estimates the annual amount of money passing through this one port in drafts from Syrians abroad as not less than seven hundred thousand pounds sterling.

Chapter X

SYRIAN ENTERPRISES

THE final aim of mission work is the development of a self-supporting, self-propagating Christian community, and hence the happiest experience of a missionary's life is connected with the first independent undertakings of the people whom he serves. In this connection there are two interesting incidents connected with the life of the evangelical church in Homs. There are men still living who remember when the gates in the old city walls were closed every night at sunset, and a belated traveler had to make himself as safe and comfortable as he could on the outside until sunrise the next morning. When this old custom passed into disuse, the city gradually outgrew the old limits and new sections



HOMS *Boys' School*

began to appear outside the old walls. When I first visited Homs, there was already a large settlement on the north side of the old city, known as the Hamidiyeh in honor of the reigning sovereign Abd-ul-Hamid. In this section of the city were a number of evangelicals and it was most desirable that there should be regular services in that section. Much difficulty was found in renting suitable quarters, and a change was necessary every year or two. At length one of the most prosperous men in the church decided that a permanent chapel must be secured. The people in that part of the city were poor and could not raise money to buy property. He decided to set aside a certain sum, and let it accumulate in his own business until he should have sufficient for the purpose. He did so, and after some years was able to purchase and remodel a house in the Hamidiyeh. That little chapel has been in constant use now for many years for public service on the Sabbath and school during

the week, and is all the result of the generous thought of this one man.

Early in the present century a zealous young man became the acting pastor of the Homs church. He was constantly seeking for means to strengthen the position of the evangelical church in the community and was soon convinced of the importance of improving the schools, so as to make them more effective and more attractive. He urged the church forward in support of his plans, and raised the standard of work in the schools. He himself was an indefatigable worker and inspired others with the spirit of service. He gained the confidence of the man referred to above and secured his help financially when needed. At length it seemed to this pastor that all their efforts would be in vain unless he could establish a boarding school for boys. It was not possible for the mission to help in these plans at that time, and our earnest friend decided to push ahead alone. A bequest was made to the evangelical church in

Homs by one of her members who died in Egypt. This was a nucleus, and others were induced to contribute larger and smaller sums. A beginning was made in temporary quarters in the city itself, while a fine site was purchased outside for the permanent building. The school was popular from the start, and, considering the cramped and unsuitable quarters in which it was conducted, did admirable work. Syrians in Egypt and America responded well to the appeal to their patriotism. A plain but commodious building was erected on the new site and the school was moved to its new home. The school has about four or five acres of land, lying higher than any other plot near the city. This tract is inclosed by a simple wall. Within is the two-story stone school building, with accommodation for something over a hundred boarders, and a schoolroom which might accommodate nearly twice that number. The kitchen and dining room are in a simpler building adjacent. Thus has been

provided a convenient, healthful home for the school, with ample playground and suitable surroundings.

A Christian community which shows the strength and ability to organize and conduct such enterprises as these has certainly a degree of vitality which gives us every confidence in its growth and advance in the future.

One of the greatest misfortunes, as it appears to me, in the situation of the subject races in Turkey, is their inability to appreciate the value and meaning of the word "loyalty." I have failed to find an Arabic word in common use which conveys the fullness of what we mean by that word "loyalty," and it seems to be because the people have had no occasion to express the idea. It is an inestimable loss to a people to live in such conditions, for there is an inevitable reaction upon character and a blighting effect on all the relations of life. This condition of things has grown rapidly in recent years, and most evidently during

the reverses of the Balkan war. It is an everyday experience, in passing along the street, to hear people exclaiming against the oppression and injustice of Turkish rule, with the expression, "Anything would be better than the present condition." Nor are such expressions any more frequent from Christians than from Moslems. A member of one of the leading Mohammedan families was recently quoted to me as saying: "We want an end of this business. We want the English to come and take charge of us." One day as a merchant was taking a bag of small coins from his safe to make a payment, he was warned not to accumulate any large amount of these small coins, as they would depreciate in value, if anything serious should happen to the Turkish Government. With a look of disgust, he said, "I would gladly lose them all and the silver coins, too, to be wholly rid of Turkey, once for all." On another occasion a simple carriage driver expressed his views in rough style, by saying, "Sir,

the Devil himself would be an improvement on the present state of things." Then more seriously, he said, "We know we are not fitted for self-government, and what we want most of all is England, or if that is impossible, then France." On a railroad train there was one other passenger in the compartment with me. While stopping at a station, something occurred to excite my companion to violent abuse of the government. When he paused I said to him, "Sir, how is it that you speak so, although you wear the fez?" He turned to me and spoke most earnestly, but with no trace of excitement, saying, "Yes, I am a Turk, and I am a Mohammedan, and nevertheless, I have no words strong enough to express my contempt for the Turkish Government." All these things are exceedingly sad, for it is an immeasurable loss to a people if they cannot love and respect those whom they must obey.

CHAPTER XI

INTERRUPTIONS

OUR life in Syria has been, on the whole, quiet, but it has not been without its shadows. There is no life without its sorrows and unexpected experiences. The comparative isolation of missionary life brings into very close fellowship those who are cut off from the closer relationship to friends in the homeland. One Sunday afternoon in the fall of 1906, I was standing in the back of our chapel, awaiting the closing exercises of the Sunday school. The telegraph messenger appeared at the door and handed me a telegram, for which I signed without serious thought. When I opened the paper and read the wholly unexpected message, all strength seemed to leave me, and I hastened to a seat, lest I fall to the floor. The message

told of the sudden death of my brother-in-law, Rev. W. K. Eddy of Sidon, while away from home on a tour. We had considered him one of the most vigorous men in the mission, for whom years of active service might be expected, and now in a moment he had been called away, leaving his family and his work to others. It took time to realize the situation but some things had to be done at once. I called my servant and sent him to secure an animal, as I had to start at once for Sidon. Arrangements had to be made for my absence, and the sad news had to be broken to the Tripoli circle of friends. By five o'clock I was ready to start, and I shall never forget that night's ride. The first twenty miles were covered in the early evening hours, on horseback over a rough, stony road, while the question kept ringing through my mind, "Why should this be?" About ten o'clock I reached the carriage road where I could take a more comfortable and speedy conveyance. All through the

dark night, as I jolted over the road, trying to get a little rest in preparation for the hard day before me, I could not turn my mind from the many problems connected with this sad experience. Who would take up the work thus suddenly dropped? What plan would be made for the family of growing children? The night was dark, but the dawn was approaching. The way seemed dark, but the Father's love had brought us to this point and he would not leave us to walk alone. In the early dawn, I reached Beirut and found the missionary friends there ready to start for Sidon, and so we all went on together, reaching the darkened home about noon. The large assembly hall was filled in the afternoon for the funeral services, and a great crowd of all classes of people marched out to the cemetery, where the mortal remains of our loved brother and fellow worker were laid away. Those are precious spots where we do the last service on earth for those we have loved, but they are doubly precious

on the mission field where the distance from the great body of family friends and relatives is so deeply felt. But these occasions strengthen the ties that bind us to the hearts and lives of those among whom we live and whom we serve.

We had scarcely adjusted ourselves to this sorrow when another of the hard experiences of life came upon us. The season had been one of exceptionally heavy work and continuous strain, which showed in a decided break in health. The doctors said work must be dropped at once and the winter be spent in Egypt, if a more serious break were to be avoided. It was not exactly a pleasure excursion on which we started during the Christmas holidays. There was no time to write ahead and make inquiries or arrangements, so we set out to a strange land among strangers, in search of health. Finding no place which seemed suitable in lower Egypt, we decided to go up the river to Assiyut, and wrote a letter to Dr. Alexander, president of the United

Presbyterian College at that place. We had no personal acquaintance and no claim upon him, but he was a missionary, and that was enough.

It was a long ride and Egyptian railroads are nothing if not dusty. Our spirits had not begun to rise yet, and we felt rather tired and wholly disreputable in appearance, when we left the train at Assiyut, ready to ask our way to the Greek hotel. But before we had a chance to do anything, we saw a bright, cheery face, bearing an evident welcome, and a hearty voice assuring us that the owner was Dr. Alexander and that he had come to take us in charge. It was the first encouraging incident, and lifted a weight from us at once. As we walked along he told us they had held a conference over our case, and, having decided that we could not be comfortable in the hotel, had placed at our disposal a rest room provided in the hospital for members of their own mission or other foreigners who needed rest and medical

attention. A more perfect provision for our need could not have been devised. We enjoyed the companionship of the corps of foreign nurses, sharing their table and home life. We had the constant companionship as well as the professional services of the four medical missionaries. Is it a wonder that I began to gain at once? After nine weeks we returned to our work, made over and with a new lease of life, a new sense of the solidarity of Christian fellowship, and a new realization of the heavenly Father's tender care.

Such experiences as that winter at Assiyut show how entirely denominational differences are forgotten on the mission field. In social intercourse, in the prayer circle, in discussion of mission problems, in the church service, in the pulpit, there was never anything to remind us that we were only Presbyterians while our kind hosts were United Presbyterians. It was a delightful opportunity for the cultivation of fellowship, and for the observation of

other forms and methods of mission work, under conditions very different from ours in Syria. The work in Egypt is relieved from many of the problems so insistent in Turkey. There is no hostile government, always suspicious of every move made by a foreigner. There is no such inefficiency in the government as makes the lives of Turkish subjects always insecure and travel dangerous. But, on the other hand, the climatic conditions in Egypt are far more trying than in Syria, as the heat is extremely enervating for most of the year. These climatic conditions undoubtedly account to some extent for the less virile, independent character of the people. But whatever the differences in climate, whatever the differences in the character of the people, whatever the differences in governmental relations, we came back from Egypt more than ever impressed with the fact that the conflict is one, the object aimed at is one, and the body of workers is one, under the direction of our one Lord and Master.

In 1911 there came another break in the routine life of the field, but with no such sorrow in it as in the former incidents. The second Conference for Workers in Moslem Lands met in Lucknow in January 1911 and our mission chose me as its delegate to that conference. The journey through the Suez Canal and down the Red Sea and across the Arabian Sea to Bombay was one of the experiences of life never to be forgotten. There were enough of us going on the same journey to form a little group of sympathetic companions and we had many an opportunity at table and on deck to talk over the matters connected with our life work.

The contrasts in the streets of Bombay are similar to those seen in all the changing Orient, but with characteristic differences calculated to catch the eye of one accustomed to the nearer East. Nowhere in Turkey do you find such broad, magnificent, paved thoroughfares as those in Bombay, and yet, beside the track of the

electric trolley, you see a crude cart jogging along behind the humpbacked bullock. On the pavements you see elaborately dressed ladies from Europe, or from the wealthy Parsee families, with their Paris gowns and modern hats, and almost at their elbows the dark-skinned members of the sweeper caste, clad in a simple loin cloth. You step out of the finely appointed barber shop in your modern hotel, with its polite, English-speaking attendant, to see by the roadside a group of swarthy Indians, crouching on the ground, as one of their number shaves the crowns of their heads.

The tourist in Galilee in the spring of the year is impressed by the variety and brilliancy of color all about him in the wild flowers of the fields. As we walked the streets of Bombay, the same impression was made upon us by the brightness and variety in the headdress of the men. If there is any color known to the dyers' art not found among the turbans of Bom-

bay it is merely because no samples have as yet been sent there. Every shape as well as every shade is found, and it would almost seem as if the excessive attention paid to the head covering had exhausted the energy of the people, leaving no desire or ability to devise any covering for the rest of the body. A stranger may wonder also at first why everyone seems to have forgotten to wash his face. Those curious blotches of varicolored clay on the forehead are not accidental nor an indication of carelessness to one's personal appearance. On the contrary, they indicate fidelity to religious duty and reveal to the initiated the special temple most recently visited by the devout worshiper. For a transient visitor, this variety and intricacy are puzzling, but to the initiated everything has its meaning and the varieties of headdress tell the tale of religious affiliation and caste gradation.

Comfortable train service carried us quickly to the north, giving us glimpses of

Delhi, the ancient Mogul capital, with its reminders of the mutiny; and Agra with its matchless architectural gem, the Taj Mahal. We reached Agra at the close of the day, and after locating ourselves at the hotel, set out on foot to have our first glimpse of the Taj by moonlight. No matter what one may have read of this wonderful building, no matter what pictures or models one may have seen, I have yet to meet a person who has not been most deeply impressed by the first vision of the reality. The approach through the dark foliage of the quiet garden gives a chance for the impressive grandeur of the marble structure to fix itself in the visitor's mind. By the time he enters the spacious archway, he has begun to appreciate the perfection of the curves, the nobility of the dimensions, the purity of the white marble and the graceful dignity of the whole combination. The beautifully inlaid black lettering from the Koran follows the curves of the lofty arch overhead, adding a sense

of sacredness to the entrance. And yet, when one is inside, he almost forgets the impressions received without. In place of stateliness and grandeur, we find here a beauty of finish and exactness of detail which surpass all the more massive qualities of the exterior. The central tomb is surrounded by a marble screen carved with a delicacy that makes one forget the marble and think he sees before him the most perfect and delicate lace veil. The pillars and panels of the screen, the inner walls of the building, as well as the sides of the tomb itself, are decorated with the most beautifully inlaid work of vines and wreaths of flowers represented in their natural colors, in the most delicate shades of precious stone. One wonders to find such exquisite work anywhere and the wonder increases when one realizes that this is not the product of modern skill and patience, but that it has stood here, from the days of the Mogul Empire, when we consider that India was a land of barbarians.

And more than this is to follow, for this wonderful mausoleum was erected at fabulous cost by a Moslem ruler, in memory of his wife.

We were not in India merely as sightseers. After a night ride on the train we reached Lahore in the early morning and at the station received the hearty welcome of J. C. R. Ewing, D.D., president of Forman Christian College. Again in northern India we had the loving handclasp of a fellow missionary and the cordial welcome to a missionary home. The short visit there could give us but a faint impression of what that college is doing for the Punjab and what a position and influence the missionaries have among the people of every class, whether Indian or British. Never did I have such a vivid impression of the awful experiences of the mutiny, or the wonderful changes wrought by British rule in India, as when I stood on some of the memorable spots at Cawnpore and Lucknow, and reviewed the record of treachery

and loyalty, cowardice and bravery, cruelty and gallantry, which were developed in the awful experiences of the Mutiny. To-day, no matter what may be the restlessness and uncertainty of the situation, India is a united country, and not a medley of hostile principalities and warring kingdoms. Railroads cover the land in every direction with an efficient service. Perfect carriage roads make the land a paradise for motor cars and bicycles. Military encampments near all the large cities assure security of life and property. Schools and colleges are extending knowledge in every direction. Wealth is taking place of poverty, knowledge of ignorance, light of darkness, and religion is coming into its own as a real force in human life and no longer as merely a badge of faction or clan.

The gathering at Lucknow was notable. Delegates of many nationalities gathered in that hall. Workers in many lands and in widely differing conditions, we came together for a common purpose. Members

of many Christian denominations, we united in the worship of one Master. Differences were forgotten in a deeper union. Whatever allegiance we owed to earthly sovereigns, we met as children of the heavenly King. Whatever may have been the language of our ordinary service, here we had but one language — that of loving fellowship. We were members of separate bands of commissioners, coming together at the feet of our Leader to ask for fuller instructions in the pursuit of his work.

The keynote of the Lucknow Conference was to win the Moslem world by love, the love of Christ incarnate in his messenger. It is one of the most hopeful signs in the advancement of the kingdom that the attractive power of love is more prominent than the overwhelming power of argument. It is a great help to the right placing of this emphasis that workers in many lands, of many nations, of many denominations, are drawing nearer together and working

more in harmony. I returned from India, rejoicing in all I had seen of God's power and blessing in that land, but with a deeper conviction that the work in India, in China, in Africa, in Syria is all one work, under one Master.

Chapter XII

OUR SUPPORTERS

ONE of the brightest things in the missionary's happy lot is the beautiful relation existing between those on the field and those whom they represent in the homeland. Many years ago we were calling, one evening, upon our landlord in Tripoli. The eldest son had recently returned from America, and in the course of conversation the father asked from what part of the United States we came, in order to see whether his son had been in the same vicinity. The son at once replied: "I know the name of the place, but I do not know in what state it is. They come from Private Funds." We could not think at first what he meant, but then discovered that he had found a missionary report among some old magazines thrown

out from the house. In this he had seen our names in a list of missionaries, giving the name of the society by which each was supported. Seeing "Private Funds" opposite our names, he thought it must be the name of the town from which we came, though, as he said, he did not know in what state it was located. A little knowledge is truly a dangerous thing.

The relation indicated by those words, which has subsisted for twenty-five years, has been most happy. When I was a senior in the seminary and had already made my application to the Foreign Board, I received a letter from Mr. George D. Dayton of Minnesota. He was the son of an elder in my father's old church in Geneva, only a few years older than I, but already a prosperous business man whose generosity in the Lord's work was becoming well known. He urged upon me the need and opportunity in the home mission field of the growing northwest. I answered him, explaining as fully as I could, the reasons

that had led me to decide that my life should be devoted to another field, realizing that my answer would be a disappointment to him and might cause some weakening of the ties of friendship already strong between us.

The next that I heard of the subject was that Mr. Dayton had written to the Foreign Board, assuming our support as the personal representatives of his family in the foreign field. Thus, instead of weakening our friendship, my choice was the beginning of a closer and warmer relation than ever. It has always been recognized as a family matter, and I shall never forget the comfort and strength that came to us in one of the early years through a letter from Mr. Dayton. It was written on Sunday afternoon, and contained words to this effect: "To-day was the time appointed for the annual offering for foreign missions in our church. Before going to church I gathered the family together and talked to the children about you as our

representatives in Syria. Then we united in prayer at the family altar for God's blessing on you. At church I placed in the collection my check for the amount I have pledged to the Board for your support." Through letters and visits in the home when on furlough, this delightful relation has grown more and more precious as the years have passed, and it has been a pleasure to acknowledge that we come from Private Funds, which, we are sure, is situated in the State of Felicity, in the United States of Brotherly Love.

It has been said that a missionary furlough is an excellent thing if it is not needed too urgently. We have had two most thoroughly enjoyable furloughs in the homeland, during our missionary life. Each visit to America has tended to refresh and invigorate us most admirably for a new period of service and we have added many to the circle of friends who encourage us in our work and keep vigorous the connecting link with the workers

at home. The periods of our absence from America have had a curious coincidence with the change in methods of locomotion in America. When we first came to Syria in 1888, the horse car was still supreme in American cities. Experimental lines of electric trolleys were being tried in certain places, but I had never seen an electric car. When we returned to America in 1897, we found the trolley in all the cities, and I remember being disturbed, the first Sunday in Philadelphia, by a strange whirring sound during the morning service. I could think of no explanation except the weird creaking of the great water wheels in Hamath, but there were no such waterworks in Philadelphia. I soon became familiar with the hum of the trolley.

During that first furlough, there was much written in the magazines about automobiles, and people were wondering whether the auto would really be practicable, but I did not see a machine. Our first sight of an auto was in Cairo, in

Egypt. We reached America on our second furlough in 1908, and the first day on shore gave us our first ride in an auto, which we found rapidly taking a recognized place in American everyday life. Again the magazines had much to say about the aëroplane, but we did not see one while in America. My first sight of a human flyer was at Allahabad, in India. It looks now as if a ride in an aëroplane might not be a strange experience in our third furlough.

The meeting of earnest Christian workers all over the land, in conventions and missionary meetings, is a real refreshment physically and spiritually. So long as the missionary's health is good, he finds it a joy to speak for the cause and mingle with the workers at home. I traveled a good many miles to meet appointments on each furlough. I spoke on many platforms, and the cordial welcome extended and the close attention paid to the message were an ample reward for whatever there was of fatigue in the service. Many times I felt

humiliated by what seemed to me the extreme and unmerited deference paid to us, simply because we were foreign missionaries. So far as Syria is concerned, the missionary of to-day asks for no sympathy on the score of physical privations. We are in close touch with European and American civilization. We can obtain whatever is necessary for physical well-being and comfort. The climate is not excessively enervating and we can have good homes. There are many things that are trying in the life of a missionary, but no more so than in the lives of many workers in the homeland.

The isolation from friends and relatives is often one of the most trying features of missionary life. When sickness or death enter the family circle far away, it is not easy to think of the miles of restless ocean that lie between us and them. The whole unchristian, unsympathetic atmosphere makes life hard at times, but the compensations are so many that it makes

one ashamed to be held up as a model of self-sacrifice. The missionary feels, as the earnest worker at home feels, and as Paul felt years ago, when he said, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

The first home-going was peculiarly happy, for in neither of the two family circles had there been any break. The only changes had come by marriage and birth. The circles were expanding, and there was no place vacated during the period of our absence. The second going was very different in this respect. Many who had been vigorous were feeble. Many who had bidden us a bright farewell were not present to welcome us on our return. Children had become men and women. There were wrinkles on the faces and gray hair on the heads of those whom we had expected to find still as young as we were. But, somehow, it began to dawn on us that we ourselves were no longer counted among the young folks in the church.

The general recollection of those two furloughs is one of bright smiles and cheery welcomes, helpful handclasps and a joyous fellowship.

Chapter XIII

PERSONAL FRIENDS

IT was one of the most delightful phases of our experience in charge of the boys' school to find how closely the ties of love to the boys bound them to our hearts, and to realize that with many of them it was no mere oriental compliment when they called us their father and mother. There are many of those lads, now growing to manhood, in whose successes we take a parental pride, and for whose growth in all that is good and true we pray, with parental earnestness. Among the many preachers and teachers in all the churches and schools, we count many as most truly our brethren and fellow workers for the Master. There are very many Syrians in all parts of America, as well as in this land, of whom we think in terms of

truest brotherhood. It is with no sense of disparagement to the multitude that I have selected three of the elders in our churches for special mention. It has seemed to me, as I look back over their lives, that there are some specially suggestive elements in the way the Lord has led them and blessed them, which are worthy of special note. At the same time these experiences have brought all three into specially close relations with myself personally. I shall mention them in the order of the commencement of my acquaintance with them.

In 1885, before I entered the mission, I was for a few months in Syria, merely as a visitor. It happened that the College in Beirut was short-handed that year, and in need of an additional teacher. Dr. Bliss asked me to help them out and so I became for two months a member of the teaching force in the preparatory department. During this time I made the acquaintance of a lad in the senior class of

that department, named Towfik Sallum. He was a quiet, studious lad, who made no trouble and was always busy with his books or seeking to increase his English vocabulary. In the brief time of my remaining in the college, my acquaintance was slight and the memory of this boy would have passed from my mind, had there been no subsequent association. When I became a member of the Tripoli Station and made the acquaintance of the various workers in the field, I found that this lad was the brother of the preacher in Hamath. Their father had been the first preacher in that church, and upon his death the eldest son had succeeded to his father's position in the church, as well as to the parental responsibility for the care and training of his younger brothers. Towfik spent some years in the service of the mission as teacher, in intervals of his college course. In 1892 he was graduated with honor, and in 1896 took his degree in medicine also. He settled at once in

Hamath, where he was well known personally, and where his family associations made a valuable professional asset. The conditions of life in ancient Hamath are exceedingly primitive and only a small portion of the population have any intelligent appreciation of the value of modern medicine. Perseverance and tact won their way and a valuable practice was built up. With increasing years and widening acquaintance, the doctor became generally known, universally trusted, and highly respected in government circles as well as among the people. In case the governor wished a reliable report on any case of attack or murder, he was sure to send Dr. Sallum to investigate. He was to be trusted to tell the truth.

When the new consitution was promulgated in 1908, it was provided that all religious sects were to be entitled to representation in the local administrative courts in rotation, irrespective of the size of those bodies. Formerly only the largest of the

Christian sects had been allowed representation. This provision gave the Protestants a right to civil equality and they put forward Dr. Sallum as their representative. He was accepted, and served most creditably for the term of two years. It was then the turn of the Catholic sect to have a representative, and the heads of the various bodies were summoned by the governor to arrange for the choice of the new member. The governor explained the situation and said that as the Protestants had held the office for two years, it was now the right of the Catholics to choose a representative to succeed the Protestant member. Then, turning to the Catholic priest, he said, "If you have a candidate who is more capable than Dr. Sallum or who is his equal, we shall be glad to welcome him, but if not, I should advise you to ask him to continue in office, acting now as representative of the Catholics." The priest replied most cordially that his sect would be delighted to be represented by Dr.

Sallum, if he would consent. In this way the doctor has become practically a permanent member of the governor's council, acting alternately for the Protestants and the Catholics. At the same time the proud member of the large Greek Orthodox sect has to give place every two years to the member chosen by the Jacobite church.

In 1892 I was in Homs for the administration of the sacraments. Among those who came in on Saturday evening was Mr. Rafool Nasser, a young man who had not been long identified with the Protestant church. He told me that he wished to have his little girl baptized the next day. He had been married for several years and this was the first child, so the occasion was one of more than usual joy. The next morning, before the service began, I saw Mr. Nasser come in and take a seat quite at the back of the church, contrary to his usual custom. He seemed depressed and I wondered what had occurred. When the time came for baptisms he made no

move to come forward and so I proceeded with the children who were presented. At the close of the service I inquired into the matter, and learned that Mr. Nasser had informed his wife the evening before that the little girl was to be baptized the next day. His wife then informed him that she had already had the child baptized secretly by the priest. This explained the depression I had noticed in the father's face. Two years later the parents stood together while I baptized the second child, and all the others have been presented without question for the rite of baptism. This was the beginning of my acquaintance with Mr. Nasser, with whom I have been somewhat intimate in recent years.

He was a man of prominent family in Homs and has been highly prospered in business, having become one of the most substantial men of the city. Most of the successful men of Homs owe their prosperity to business conducted in Egypt. They spend the winters in Egypt, advanc-

ing money to the peasants on their cotton crops and also furnishing them certain classes of imported goods on credit. It has been a profitable business, even to those who have not been led away by the temptation of avarice to impose on the simplicity of the Egyptian peasant. On one occasion I was talking to Mr. Nasser about the high standards of morality obligatory on the true Christian merchant. He then told me the following incident in the simplest manner. As a young man he started with his cousin on a very small capital. They invested their cash capital in stock for their little store, purchasing so far as they could on credit. Mr. Nasser returned to Homs, leaving his cousin in charge of the business in Egypt. Scarcely had he reached home when word came of the complete destruction of their store and all its contents by fire. It was a heavy blow for the young men, and the first impulse was to go through bankruptcy, settle up as well as they could and give

up the enterprise. Friends and creditors came to their help and volunteered to scale down their claims and furnish new capital for the two men to start again. They were prospered from the beginning. After some years Mr. Rafool Nasser decided that he was unwilling to have the friends who were so kind to him suffer from the old loss. He wrote to his cousin, saying that he had no wish to control his partner's action, but asking him to pay off his share of those old losses carried by their friends after the fire, and charge the amount against his personal account. The cousin wrote back, "Whatever you do, I shall do also." In the light of this incident, will anyone say that commercial honor is confined to the West?

There was a long period of hesitation, after Mr. Nasser was convinced intellectually of the truth of the evangelical faith, before he joined the Church. He has explained this to me in the following way: He knew that if he gave in his adherence

to the Protestant doctrine, his conscience would require him to give far more of his possessions than he had been accustomed to do in the Greek church. It took a long time to bring his will to yield. In fact, his head was reached before his purse was opened. . He gave up the conflict at last and then said, in closing the account of his experience, "I've gotten way beyond that now, for I have learned the joy of giving." He is not a millionaire, but the Lord has blessed him with considerable property, and he recognizes his position as that of steward. He has been the leading spirit in the enterprises of the Homs church, spoken of in another place.

About the end of the year 1895, I was sitting one evening in my study when the bell rang, and one of my neighbors, Mr. Yusuf Faris, entered. He laid on my desk a bundle of Turkish silver dollars, amounting to some thirty dollars American money. He said he had been looking over his accounts for the year and found this balance

in his tithe account, and so he wished me to use it for him in a way that he indicated, in the furtherance of the Lord's business. This was a little matter, but it was a true index to the man. A few years previous to this he had moved to the city from a neighboring village. Among his motives for this move was to avoid being forced into a political position he felt to be inconsistent with his new position as a Protestant Christian. He decided to open a dry-goods store in the city, but was unwilling to conduct business in the ordinary way of the country. He rented a very small shop and brought his stock of goods from Beirut. He decided upon a fair profit, and set his price on the goods. People were not accustomed to this method and so were slow to buy from the new shop. When they found him unvarying in his prices, they went away to buy elsewhere, getting, perhaps, an inferior article at a slightly lower price. Mr. Faris had his full share of determination and was not to

be turned back from the course upon which he had decided. He had an unfailingly pleasant manner with everyone, and showed no resentment at those who bought elsewhere. For months the sales in this little shop were not enough to pay the rent, but there was no change of policy. Gradually people began to compare more carefully and discovered that in no case were they able to buy the same quality of goods elsewhere for less than Mr. Faris' first price. They began to realize that it was a distinct saving of time and temper to avoid the long haggling over prices to which they had been accustomed. By degrees they began to buy from Mr. Faris, and it was not long before some of the country shopkeepers would come to him with a list of goods and ask to have them put up without even asking the prices. Business grew, a larger shop was necessary, two shops, three shops, until at present his goods fill three large storerooms, while a fourth is necessary for his office and bookkeeping.

Two months seldom pass, and often less than a month, between trips to Beirut for fresh goods, and he and his three grown sons are kept busy handling the undertaking.

In every good enterprise, in Tripoli, or in presbytery, Mr. Yusuf Faris is a leader, with clear advice and generous subscriptions. When the home mission work of the presbytery was organized, he was one of the leaders, and has continued to be the main support of the work. When the plans for the Tripoli Boys' School were under consideration and there was some danger that lack of money and other considerations might necessitate the removal of the school from Tripoli, Mr. Faris and his sons came forward with a generous offer of financial help, during a period of years aggregating nearly eighteen hundred dollars. This made him the third largest individual donor and we were glad to place his picture among those on the wall of the school reception room. In all

the intercourse of these years, while watching the growth and development of character in this man, there has grown in my own heart a strength of personal attachment such as I have seldom felt for any other in America or in Syria.

Chapter XIV

TRIPOLI BOYS' SCHOOL

THE one enterprise which stands out most conspicuously in our life in Syria and which has absorbed more of our thought and activity than any other, is the boarding school for boys in Tripoli. In the earlier years of our work in Tripoli field, I found an important item to be the selection of promising candidates from the pupils in the village schools for further education in one of the mission boarding schools. We were anxious to encourage the higher education of boys, for in this respect as in many others, north Syria is more backward than other parts of the country. Means of communication were poor and it was not an easy thing for people to send their children to a distance of four or five days' travel. We used



TRIPOLI BOYS' SCHOOL *First Home*



TRIPOLI BOYS' SCHOOL *Second Home*

every means at our disposal to persuade reluctant parents, offering free tuition and sometimes traveling expenses and help with clothing. By all these means we could gather, from the whole territory, a dozen, or fifteen, or, at most, twenty boys, whose parents were willing to send them to school.

But emigration to America gradually opened the eyes of the people to the commercial advantages of education. Ignorant parents who had gone abroad began to send back money, with urgent instructions to put their boys in the American schools. We found the number of applicants increasing and a new willingness to pay, in part at least, for the education. Instead of a dozen, we had sixty or more to provide for and the tide was rising. Conditions were the same elsewhere and it was not easy for the other schools to receive this larger number from our district. Why, then, should our boys go so far from home?

The eagerness of some of these lads to

gain an education went to our hearts, and the hardest thing we had to do was to refuse an earnest pleader for whom we had no place left. One day in Homs a young man came to me, pleading for a place in Sidon. He was making his own living as an artisan, and had only a simple education. I wished to test his pluck and pointed out all the difficulties in the way of one in his circumstances. He had thought it all out and said he could work at his trade in the summer vacations and earn enough for his clothing. But it was a five days' journey to Sidon, and the cost of the journey must be provided for in some way. There was not a moment's hesitation as he said, "I'll walk." And he did walk, showing a manly contempt for obstacles in the way of gaining an education.

This growing demand for an education such as our American schools give, with the increasing ability of many to pay the cost, seemed a clear call for action. Our

mission had been criticized for putting too much energy and money into education, so it seemed a chance at the same time to take a step in advance in the line of self-support. I did not wish to go before the mission with my proposition until I had it well supported. For this reason I wrote to Mr. George D. Dayton who has supported us through all our missionary life, and laid the matter before him, making two distinct requests. If such a school were to be a success, it must have its own permanent premises, especially adapted to its use, and I asked whether he would help us to secure this for the school. It did not seem wise to wait however for the accomplishment of this purpose to open the school. I was confident, myself, that the school could be made self-supporting if the premises were provided, but I wished a guarantee to lay before the mission, and so asked Mr. Dayton to underwrite the enterprise to the extent of three hundred dollars a year, in case of a deficit. He re-

sponded promptly, acceding to both requests. I was ready then to go before the mission. Our proposition called for two things from the Board, the addition of a missionary to our Tripoli station and provision of rent for premises in which to open the school temporarily. Both requests were granted and we were authorized to go ahead, even before receiving our additional missionary.

Ten years after opening the school, owing to removals and delay for language study, the whole work of the station, with the addition of the school, still rests on the shoulders of two men, who live in hope of having their new associate, promised ten years ago. It has been like the pursuit of a mirage or the fatuous end of the rainbow. More than once we have given a sigh of satisfaction and said, "Well, next year, or at latest, the year after, we shall be able to settle down to normal lines and really do our work right." An emergency has always arisen somewhere, our pleasant

dreams have faded away, and we have settled down again to try to carry the extra load; but each time this is done, the weight seems to press more heavily and a sense of discouragement steals into the tired heart.

We were ready to begin school in 1903 and had laid in some supplies for the coming year, when cholera appeared in the land, interfering with all lines of travel and communication. It was decided to postpone the opening until the next year and special plans for temporary work were made for the various teachers. In October 1904 the Tripoli Boys' School opened its doors, and there was every indication of hearty support. We had planned to begin on a very small scale with only twenty boarders. We had rented a house in which the boys were to sleep and study, the kitchen and dining room being in the basement. Before the day of opening we had thirty-two insistent applicants and wanted very much to receive them all. Rooms were rented across the street for

study and recitation purposes, releasing for a dormitory the large room before assigned to study. This, with extra crowding of the beds, made room, and the whole number were admitted. The beds were very crude, being merely boards laid across rude iron supports. Everything was as simple as possible.

We were all inexperienced in school administration and had about as much to learn as did the boys, but that first year was a year of real delight. The school was small and the family feeling was encouraged in every way. Every Sunday evening the boys came to our home for a social sing, and we learned that the neighbors looked forward to the enjoyment of the volume of boyish voices that rang out on the evening air. In the middle of the year it was possible to transfer the school to much more commodious quarters, where all school and household functions could be under one roof. The most satisfactory feature, perhaps, was the financial outcome.

When the books were closed, at the end of the year, there was no deficit to be provided for, and so our highest anticipations seemed to be justified. This has continued to be the normal record of the school, the current income providing for the current expense, excepting the item of rent. The second year we were able to start in with American desks, and iron beds in the dormitories, and had an enrollment of sixty pupils.

A detailed history of the school would make this chapter too long, but its growth and success have meant a great deal to us in our missionary life. In 1909, when we returned from our second furlough, we had a sufficient building fund to justify definite plans for the permanent home of the school. It was not easy to decide on the best location. Every place suggested had advantages and disadvantages. We could not visit any locality in the most casual way without very largely increasing the value of land in the vicinity. We looked

at land near the sea, in the gardens, on each side of the city, but gradually all minds turned to an olive orchard on the brow of the hill just north of the city. It might not be possible to purchase it, but we all agreed that it was the place we wanted, if it could be obtained. Inquiry revealed the fact that this piece of property belonged to a family of brothers and sisters who held it as joint heritage from their father. One of the brothers got the whole into his possession, excepting the share of one sister, whose claim was something less than one-twelfth. Her husband was an avaricious fellow who thought he could hold us up for whatever he might demand. We purchased the remainder of the property, but could do nothing toward building until our partner's share should be set off and a legal division made. We proposed every possible division but nothing was acceptable. We tried the courts and found it almost as hopeless as Dickens' picture of chancery. Finally an amicable

adjudication and division out of court was arranged by common friends. We went to the hill with professional measurers and proceeded to lay off our partner's portion. When he was convinced that we would prefer to give him at the north end, he promptly announced that he would take the south part, which was after all much to our advantage. Then the boundary was laid out very exactly, giving him his full share. After the peg had been carefully set, his son petulantly moved it a foot or more farther on our side, evidently intending to irritate us into a refusal of the division. We consented, however, the division wall was erected, the legal papers drawn up and our property was secured.

The next step was to obtain a building permit from the government. Every official is suspicious of every other, and each is watching for a chance to enter a complaint against the other. From one office we went to another, with favorable reports from the city engineer, but nothing was

accomplished. There seemed to be no valid objection anywhere, and we were assured that the permit would be sent back as soon as our petition reached Constantinople. After long waiting, instead of the permit there came back another series of inquiries on points already fully explained. Preliminary work on cisterns, foundations and preparation of stone was in full progress, but the winter passed and no permit was received. At last a new governor came to Tripoli who for some reason took a personal interest in bringing the matter to a conclusion. He sent vigorous letters and telegrams to Constantinople and in due time the permit was issued, and at the end of May 1912, work was begun on the building proper. Every means was used to push work forward as fast as possible, through the summer and fall, so as to have the roof on before the rains came. The walls were completed, the roof timbers in place, but where were the tiles? These had been ordered long in advance, and

were known to be on the way. Just at this unfortunate moment war between Turkey and Greece was declared and it appeared that our tiles were coming in a Greek steamer, which could not now approach a Turkish port. The fall rains came down on our roofless building and it was not until January that the tiles were received. When they arrived, there was great rejoicing. The workmen all left their tools to help unload the wagons. The schoolboys went up on the hill and, forming lines from the ground to the roof of the building, passed up the tiles from hand to hand with shouts and songs of joy. No damage had been done the building, since the rains tended to set the stone walls and cement flooring more perfectly, but the plastering and carpenter work for the interior were delayed, and the precious rain water for the cisterns was lost.

After the roof was finished, work progressed rapidly and the utility and beauty of the building developed every day more

and more clearly. When Easter vacation came everything was ready, and in the absence of the boys, the school furniture was moved up to the new building so that all was in good order when vacation was over. The new term opened in the new home.

On May 21, 1913, the day was given over to the dedication of the new building, and a happier day than that has not come in the history of the school. In the forenoon, there were races and athletic sports, with a football game on the playground behind the building. In the afternoon, hosts of friends and neighbors inspected the building and grounds, and at four o'clock the Assembly Hall was crowded with the pupils and their friends. On the platform sat the governor and president of the municipality, with the missionaries and teachers. The boys sang heartily their songs of welcome and a special dedication hymn written for the occasion from the text, "Except Jehovah build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Their

voices rang out especially as their handkerchiefs waved in their own school song in honor of T. B. S.

This building is rich in significance, for it is a memorial throughout. The main fund was raised in honor of my father, and so the building is to be known as the Henry A. Nelson Memorial. Smaller sums were given as special memorials to relatives of the givers, and the bell in the tower was given by parents of a young man, their only son, who was called to the heavenly home just before his twenty-first birthday. Those parents have the comfort of feeling that their son's voice is still calling in the tones of that bell to the lads of Syria, and so still serving the Master.

Our rejoicing in the new building was great, but not complete. With all our efforts it was not possible to finish the top story of the building, and the friends of the school will have plenty of opportunity to help us improve and increase our facilities in the service of the youth of north Syria.

Chapter XV

MOVING

IN 1910 the Syria mission decided upon an advance. The constitution had been declared in Turkey and everyone hoped that a new era had really begun for the people of the empire. Whatever might be the political results, there were clear signs of industrial improvement. The German railroad was being pushed toward Bagdad. Work was progressing rapidly on the line from Tripoli to Homs. There could be but little doubt that the importance of Homs as a commercial center would be greatly enhanced in the near future. The strong evangelical community had been urgent for years that a missionary family live in Homs. This was finally decided upon and the choice of the mission fell on us. There are very few houses for



HOMS



HEATHEN TEMPLE AND MOUNT HERMON

rent in Homs, and hence it seemed necessary to plan for a missionary residence as soon as possible. An appropriation was made from the Kennedy bequest for this purpose, and a piece of land was acquired from the management of the Syrian Evangelical Boarding School.

Moving in Syria is a different proposition from what it is in America. There are no professional packers. The missionary must do his own packing, if he would avoid excessive breakage. He must keep an eye on the porters as they put his goods in the wagons. He must oversee the freight men as they stow away the goods in the cars. At the Homs end of the line every piece had to be carried to its destination on the back of a donkey or a mule. It was no easy matter to balance some of the large boxes on the insecure saddles, but it was all accomplished with time and patience, with very little injury.

We secured a little house in the city for six months, which could be occupied while

of Sayid Khalid, said to have cost sixteen thousand pounds. It is a beautiful building, but recently completed. Between us and it lies the old city, with its seventy thousand plain people. At present a vast majority of the population look to the north rather than to the south, but it is our strong hope that the more vital strength represented by Christian education and Christian homes will win the victory over this great city and the surrounding country, so that all shall be won for Christ.



HAMIDIYEH MOSQUE *Tripoli*

OIL CITY GATE *Tripoli*

Chapter XVI

THE MUEZZIN OR THE BELL

AS the close of this little record comes near, there appears before me a contrast or a conflict. Shall Syria continue, as in the past, dominated by the minaret and all it signifies, or shall the church bell be heard more clearly and more truly than it has been in the past?

Many years ago, in the city of Homs, the large and influential Orthodox Greek community wished to put up a bell in their church. This was found to be wholly impossible because of the unyielding bigotry and hostility of the Moslem community and the government. Finally the bishop consented to hang up a slab of hard, thoroughly seasoned wood, and this was struck with a mallet at the time of worship, to call the people together. After quite a

long interval, when the controversy was largely forgotten, this wooden slab was quietly exchanged for one of steel, and a clearer sound was obtained. This created a little disturbance, but was quickly accepted as an accomplished fact, for it is a common saying in Turkey: "Whatever is done is permitted. Whatever is requested is forbidden." After another long interval a large bell was sent from Russia for this Homs Church of the Forty Martyrs. In view of the relations of Turkey to Russia, no open opposition could be shown, and the bell was brought with great demonstrations of joy and put in its place where it rings to call the people to worship. Following the lead of this strongest of the Christian communities, all the others have brought bells since, and they are in regular use. But the near city of Hamath waited some years longer before hearing its first regular church bell.

Many years ago an old sheik in Tripoli was calling on me. He was intelligent

and friendly and I felt that I could speak with him somewhat freely. When I said to him that the voice of the muezzin in the neighboring mosque was not so clear as it might be, he told me the following incident in his father's life: The French consul in Tripoli lived near a mosque. The muezzin had a musical voice, and the consul enjoyed hearing the call to prayer in the summer evenings. For some reason this man was removed and another put in his place, whose voice was harsh and unpleasant. A few days later the consul arrayed himself in official style, and with the attendance of his cavasses in full regalia, he went to call on the old sheik, the father of my informant. It was not a feast day nor time for official calls, so his coming in this manner created some astonishment and a little uneasiness. After the ordinary salutations had been exchanged, the consul addressed the sheik in formal manner, to this effect: "I have come to-day, officially to convey to you

my own personal thanks and that of the government I represent for the great favor you have done me." The sheik was even more astonished at this opening, and protested that nothing worthy of such recognition had been done. "Yes," said the consul, "you may not have been aware of the great kindness done, but it is no less worthy of note. In the mosque near my house there was a muezzin who gave the daily call to prayer in a voice that went to the heart of the hearer, and it would not have been strange if he had won my allegiance to Islam. Now, however, he has been removed and a man with a harsh, repellant voice put in his place, so there is no longer any danger that the representative of a Christian nation should deny his faith and follow Islam. For this reason, I convey to you officially and personally my most profound thanks." No sooner had the caller taken his leave than orders were sent to have the sweet-voiced muezzin restored to his former position in the vicin-

ity of the consulate. The keen consul had gained what he wanted and what a direct request might not have accomplished. No offense was given and all were pleased.

After he had told me this story, I said, "Sheik Ali, there are two things which I grudge to you Mohammedans; one is the custom of summoning people to divine worship by the call of the human voice rather than by a metallic bell; and the other is the exclusive use among yourselves of the salutation, 'Peace be to you.'" When one Moslem meets another, he salutes him, "Peace be to you," and the other responds, "And on you be the peace of God." A Moslem will never intentionally give this salutation to a Christian. I continued, "That salutation belongs to the Christians more than to you, for it was the farewell message from our Master to his disciples, when he said, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.'"

Which is it to be in Syria? Shall the separation continue, and one large part of

the population heed the call to prayer by the human voice from the minaret, while another part worship the same God in the churches in answer to the summons of a bell? This unfortunate state of affairs will never cease until the heart of the Christian Church is so full of the love of Christ and his perfect peace that the Moslem population shall hear through them a louder cry than the voice of the muezzin, calling them to worship the one living God, and to know him through the perfect life of his only Son, our Lord. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."